

**IMPLEMENTING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY:
A FRAMEWORK FOR APPLYING AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

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A thesis submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Global Security Studies

Baltimore, Maryland
May, 2015

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Abstract

The following thesis portfolio addresses the overarching research question of “How should U.S. foreign policy be implemented?” To answer this question, the thesis examines three areas of study: (1) how policy is sold, (2) how it should be crafted, and (3) finally, how it could be implemented.

Chapter one examines how U.S. presidents sell foreign policy to the American public, focusing on the tool that religion and religious speech play in the process. While a powerful political force, the chapter sought to determine *how* religion can drive policy. Examining presidential speeches and decisions pertaining to foreign policy in two case studies, the research determined that religion can play a number of roles in any given presidency, and that it can be used to secure political capital for momentous policy initiatives or significant shifts in policy.

Chapter two asked “What should be the fundamental/theoretical underpinnings of American foreign policy?” This chapter addressed this question in the hope of learning what core considerations should always be contemplated when devising policy. After analyzing various geopolitical theories, we set out how to describe the utility conservative geopolitical thought brings to current foreign policy issues and why certain hard-truths to include culture, geography and history must always be consulted in formulating policy.

Chapter three was dedicated to completing the foreign policy process, exploring the topic of application or implementation. Having explored how policy can be sold and how it should be crafted, it was natural to examine how it would successfully be put into action. Specifically, the research goal in this chapter was to determine the most critical

component required to successfully implement U.S. foreign policy and then construct a prospective policy to demonstrate implementation of a policy aimed at preserving a vital national interest. To demonstrate this, a threat analysis was conducted on the possibility of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) terror attack on the American homeland.

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Table of Contents:

Portfolio Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Religion in Monumental U.S. Foreign Policy.....	10
Introduction.....	11
Literature Review: Roles of Religion in Presidential Decision Making.....	13
Received Knowledge: Why Are Religious Roles Selected?.....	24
Theory & Hypothesis: Religion as a Driver vs Religion as Determinant.....	25
Methodology: Decision Analysis.....	27
Data.....	28
Discussion.....	42
Conclusion.....	44
Chapter Two: Grounded in Reality: The Call for a Geopolitical Foreign Policy.....	46
Introduction.....	47
Literature Review: Theories of Modern Geopolitics.....	49
Received Knowledge: Old School Lessons for the Future.....	59
Theory & Hypothesis: Fundamental Principles & Respect for the Uncompromising.....	61
Methodology: Old Answers to New Problems?.....	62
Data.....	65
Discussion.....	73
Conclusion	74
Chapter 3: The Formulation of Foreign Policy: An Assessment of CBRN Terror.....	77
Introduction.....	78
Literature Review: Elements of Successful US Foreign Policy.....	83
Received Knowledge: Deep Thinkers & Architects.....	91
Theory & Hypothesis: Policy Formulation.....	92
Methodology: Identifying Top Concerns.....	95
Data – CBRN Analysis.....	96
Discussion	117

Conclusion.....	121
Portfolio Conclusion.....	122
Bibliography.....	125
Curriculum Vitae.....	136

Portfolio Introduction:

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has struggled with implementing foreign policy. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union following the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, the United States virtually overnight found itself alone as the world's sole superpower. Alone at the top, with no obvious threats – such as another ideologically-opposed superpower anywhere on the immediate horizon – policymakers in both parties failed to collectively define American national interests. Indeed, the great tragedy was that we failed to capitalize on a unique opportunity in which we could shepherd in an era of global prosperity and peace and bring a number of estranged countries into the fold. One of the rarest occurrences in world history – a period of benevolent sole hegemony – passed us by. To be fair, the task facing our nation's policymakers was a massive undertaking; the collapse of our greatest foe and the immediate need for a new national policy no doubt shocked the core of those whose life's work had been dismantling and defeating the communist threat. With the disappearance of the threat that in many ways defined their professional and personal lives, the sense of urgency to find a new cause was surely significant.

The temptation to energetically engage – especially in a national cause – should always be preceded by careful and thoughtful analysis, as well as a clear and concise understanding of what one seeks to affect and a realistic determination of whether or not the instruments of national power can achieve the desired end. And yet the period of time immediately following the end of the Cold War seemed to lack this realistic assessment.

The absence of a readily-identifiable threat resulted in what Walter Russell Mead calls America's "lost years."¹ This period of time, roughly spanning from late-1989 to September 11, 2001 – represented a period of strategic inaction. By failing to look long-term and form unified consensus on (1) what intrinsic American interests were, (2) what constituted potential rising threats, and (3) work through a deliberate calculus predicated on strategic thought and a strong sense of history, administrators of American foreign policy failed to utilize the preponderance of political capital and influence that the United States had accrued by winning the ideological struggle against totalitarianism that personified the twentieth century.

We would argue that a combination of failures of varying levels of importance to the foreign policy formulation process have occurred and have led us to the poor execution of foreign policy initiatives proposed by successive presidential administrations dating back to the end of the Cold War. These failures include the aforementioned inability to seize the initiative following the fall of the Soviet Union, a lack of strategic vision regarding America's role in the world and a fundamental disconnect between theories of foreign policy and achievable outcomes.

The "end of history" and the break out of peace all over the world described by Francis Fukuyama as he observed the imminent fall of the Soviet Union² and the sense that something very profound had occurred was not misplaced or incorrect. Rather, it was incomplete in that so many involved in the policy process perceived a period of relaxation, where investment and attention to foreign matters could be minimized and

¹ Mead, Walter Russell. *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy In a World At Risk*. New York: Knopf, 2004, 5.

² Fukuyama, Francis, "Have we reached the end of history?" Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1989. <http://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P7532>.

resources diverted towards enlarging and expanding domestic and non-defense programs. This period of relaxation can best be attributed to the belief that a “particular period of postwar history” was passing by, leading to a point marking “mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”³

This of course was incredibly misplaced and ran counter to a millennia of world history. To expect all of mankind to accept “Western liberal democracy” was to ignore realities such as history, societal norms and traditions of cultures far different from our own. An appreciation of history can tell us that some cultures are incompatible with American-style government. The recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the attempts at nation-building that took place following the invasion phases provide clear evidence of this and illustrate a significant part of the problem; which is that we as a nation have set unrealistic goals regarding what we can accomplish – particularly regarding the use of military forces. The misplaced belief in “liberal-style democracy for all” has mired us down in wars without end because we fail to account for the realities of the conflict and because we fail to properly align concrete objectives with attainable goals. In essence, we fail to account for the factors critical to the implementation of sustainable policy.

One can draw a relatively straight line from the ill-conceived conclusion regarding the “universalization of Western liberal democracy” clung to towards the end of the twentieth century and the “messianic dimension” of U.S. foreign policy that has largely personified U.S. national policy over roughly the last two decades. Defined as the belief that American society is the best possible society and therefore should be emulated

³ Ibid.

throughout the world,⁴ it is apparent that it is drawn from Fukuyama's notion of having arrived at the end of history.

By failing to craft a new foreign policy that would maximize the preponderance of U.S. power and goodwill and instead cling to a poorly constructed theory, America stumbled out of the gate at the start of the twenty-first century. American foreign policy was further doomed by the fact that once the operating theory was identified as flawed, no one went back to the drawing board to rework a feasible plan of application or implementation.

To "fix" American foreign policy, it is best to form a framework by which the foreign policy process can be understood; while also learning what foreign policy should be aimed at accomplishing; which of course is tethered to a fundamental and realistic understanding of the limits of national power.

We would argue that the problems associated with implementation generally flow from a failure to formulate. Formulation of course is contingent on a multitude of factors, chief among which is a realistic understanding of what the instruments of American national power can and can't do, what basic or vital national interests are, and acknowledgment of the fixed hard-truths that the policy must contend with.

This work is an attempt to form a framework for implementing American foreign policy. This framework is built around three critical areas consisting of selling, crafting and implementing policy. A chapter is dedicated to each of these areas, with the intent of clearly articulating the important considerations pertaining to each step of the foreign policy process with the overall goal of improving the implementation process. It is our belief that if a deep appreciation of the core considerations are attained, then the

⁴ Mead, Walter Russell. *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy In a World At Risk*, 5.

foundation can be set for building a more sustainable foreign policy that will invariably be capable of securing vital *American* interests.

In chapter one, we examine how presidents sell foreign policy agendas to the American public, looking specifically at religion and how it has been used as a tool by American presidents to accumulate political capital in order to execute significant foreign policy agendas. Religion has been a powerful force throughout world history, and to this day is used as both a battle cry and as a call for peace. The intense power religion possesses and the influence it can exert over individuals – particularly as it pertains to securing public support for prospective policies – necessitates that its role is examined.

Religion has had a significant impact on the implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan are used as case studies, as both were found to be representative of major political parties, and both were found to provide religion with various roles within their administrations – even within one policy – which makes plain to the reader the importance it holds in the selling portion of the implementation process.

In chapter two, we examine what the underpinnings of American foreign policy should consist of in order to generate sustained success and the achievement of national objectives abroad. Chapter two explores what the formula for generating U.S. foreign policy should be, and by examining the scholarly record, we argue for the inclusion of conservative geopolitical thought and the principles it is predicated upon. Research suggested that this is the best school of thought to pursue, since it accounts for inescapable realities (“hard truths”), and directs limited national resources towards objectives where they can have the greatest strategic impact (and only where a national

interest at stake). Emphasizing geography, resource allocation for national production and sustainment, the maintenance of military forces in conjunction with national objectives so that vital interests are secured, conservative geopolitics stresses the uncompromising nature of the trinity of culture, geography and history and the need for assessments developed with these considerations in mind.

While globalization has integrated the world, we are still a world of *nations* with *national agendas*, and these national agendas often run counter to the agendas held by international organizations. With this paramount consideration in mind, a foreign policy rooted in conservative geopolitical thought should be pursued by the United States. Of the other schools examined – internationalism, multilateral institutionalism, neoconservatism, progressive geopolitics – conservative geopolitics allows the U.S. to maintain its sovereignty and allocate resources towards areas of strategic need. As we have been reminded recently, even a prosperous nation like the U.S. must be judicious with her resources – as no nation's resources are finite.

Finally, chapter three, sets forth to determine what the most critical component is in the implementation step of applying American foreign policy (the chief executive) and then seeks to ascertain what qualities the president should possess if wishing to establish a *sustainable* and *successful* foreign policy. With this knowledge, we construct a formula by which policy can be generated, and examines the threat Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) terror poses to the American homeland to demonstrate how the formula would work.

The defense of the American homeland from a CBRN terror attack was chosen to illustrate how the totality of implementation process could work and was deliberately

chosen with the preceding chapters in mind. First, CBRN weapons have been touted by national security professionals to be the top threat facing the U.S.; a “catastrophic attack on the U.S. homeland” and “proliferation and/or use of weapons of mass destruction” were highlighted and prioritized as “top strategic risks” in the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS).⁵ The Director for Strategic Planning on the National Security Council staff has stated the threat of nuclear weapons are as grave as any threat facing us, as is the potential use of these weapons by non-state actors and terrorist organizations⁶ – observations reiterated in the 2015 NSS.⁷ Experts from academia also recognize grand terror attacks, particularly CBRN-types, to be the greatest threat to the American homeland⁸ and that “given the mentality of many terrorists...and the relative ease with which chemical, radiological and biological weapons can be created, it is highly likely that several, perhaps many WMD attacks...will occur.”⁹

With these considerations in mind, as well as those explored at greater detail in chapter two, devising a framework for crafting and implementing a policy aimed at defending against a CBRN terror attack is in accord with a foreign policy rooted in conservative geopolitics, thereby complementing chapter two.

Second, defense against CBRN-related terror attacks considers the element of religion; as it serves as the link between some of the most violent Islamic terrorist organizations and the pursuit of CBRN-type weapons.

⁵ White House. *National Security Strategy*. 2015, 2.

⁶ Thomas, Troy. Lecture. *2015 National Security Strategy: Process, Principles, and Priorities*. Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab. 27 April. 2015. Lecture.

⁷ White House. *National Security Strategy*, 11.

⁸ Art, Robert J. *A Grand Strategy for America*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003, 47.

⁹ Walton, C. Dale, *Grand Strategy and the Presidency: Foreign Policy, War and the American Role In the World*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012, 73.

Take the Islamic State for example. An organization that has threatened direct confrontation with the U.S.¹⁰, the Islamic State is also dedicated to pursuing an extremely violent and brutal ideology ultimately concerned with bring on the apocalypse.¹¹ The organization's strategy is dictated by this mission, and it strongly suggests that they would be interested in pursuing weapons of mass destruction or mass casualty. According to Will McCants at Brookings, members of the Islamic State "believe that the final apocalyptic battles with the infidel are swiftly approaching,"¹² further suggesting that the threat this group and other like-minded organizations intent on the wholly-destructive targeting of infidels – nonbelievers, non-Muslims and those associated with Western influence –are serious about the use of awesomely destructive weapons.

When considered with the general proliferation of dual-use technology, increased access to technological knowledge required to build improvised devices and weapons, and the growing access to precursors required to build them (the World Nuclear Association, for example reported in April 2015 that a significant surplus of enriched uranium exists worldwide¹³), terrorist pursuit of CBRN weapons is a top threat to the U.S.

The overarching topic of U.S. foreign policy that spans the thesis portfolio and the subtopics explored in each chapter: religion, theories of geopolitics, and U.S foreign policy implementation regarding the threat of CBRN-related terror, are massive topics in their own right, and it was not our intent to address every possible variable pertaining to

¹⁰ "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)," Counter Terrorism Guide, national Counterterrorism Center, http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqi_isil.html (May 3, 2015).

¹¹ Beauchamp, Zach, "ISIS is really obsessed with the apocalypse," Vox, April 6, 2015, <http://www.vox.com/2015/4/6/8341691/isis-apocalypse> (May 3, 2015).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Uranium Enrichment," World Nuclear Association, last updated April 2015, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/nuclear-fuel-cycle/conversion-enrichment-and-fabrication/uranium-enrichment/> (May 3, 2015).

each area of study. One could easily dedicate their entire life to the study of any one topic examined within this portfolio – and indeed some have. The general goal of this portfolio was to link together what we saw as three important considerations that should be thought of when administering U.S. foreign policy. Having identified each specific topic as important and relevant to the application of U.S. foreign policy generally and to U.S. national security specifically, we sought to determine how each interfaced in the implementation of foreign policy so that a framework could be built in the hope that what should be core considerations are reintroduced to the administering of American foreign policy.

Lastly, this thesis portfolio does not pretend to suggest how to fix something as complex and large as U.S. foreign policy. What we hope is that this thesis portfolio will breathe life into what we consider a few important topics that seem to have been forgotten or at the minimum, need to be relearned. We hope that this work will contribute to a healthy national discussion of how U.S. foreign policy should be implemented – regardless of party.

Religion in Monumental U.S. Foreign Policy

Matthew Rolfes

Research & Thesis I

Introduction

The President of the United States is in essence America's top decision maker; throughout our nation's history, the Commander in Chief has been primarily tasked with making choices on behalf of the nation. I would define decision making here as the process of making an informed choice among a variety of alternatives. Strategic decision making, the type expected from the president, is no different, especially with regard to foreign policy; although there are a few other critical factors that must be considered when one is analyzing the president's selection of a choice among a variety of alternatives. These factors include: 1) that the choice selected or the decision made by the president is often made without complete information and 2) that the president's own life experiences, values and spiritual beliefs – or, in a word, religion (or lack thereof) – have the potential of impacting the outcome. It is usually a given that many of the hard choices that the president must make regarding foreign policy will be made with incomplete information; over the course of the 20th century, national intelligence and collection agencies have been created with the stated hope of addressing this first factor. Similar efforts are still being made today; one such example is the National Security Agency's electronic telecommunications data collection efforts. The second factor is more difficult to address because it is inherently abstract and contains a greater amount of variance.

Some U.S. presidents have been deeply religious people and did not make that a secret during their time in office. Historical analysis of this group has revealed that their personal beliefs or faith profoundly affected their political agendas. There is little debate regarding this. As Walter Russell Mead stated in his work "God's Country?":

“Religion has always been a major force in U.S. politics, policy, identity, and culture. Religion shapes the nation's character, helps form Americans' ideas about the world, and influences the ways Americans respond to events beyond their borders. Religion explains both Americans' sense of themselves as a chosen people and their belief that they have a duty to spread their values throughout the world. Of course, not all Americans believe such things -- and those who do often bitterly disagree over exactly what they mean. But enough believe them that the ideas exercise profound influence over the country's behavior abroad and at home.”¹⁴

Others have declined to identify with one particular religion and have opted not to make religion or personal religious belief the mainstay of their political agenda. Yet religion, regardless of the role afforded to it by the president, perennially plays a factor in the setting of the president's foreign policy agenda, which raises the question; if religion can play many roles in a president's foreign policy agenda, how are the roles selected and do executives deploy a religious response when confronted with specific foreign policy issues?

This essay will explore the various roles that religion has held in an effort to examine how religion has been deployed in promoting foreign policy agendas. By determining how religion has been used by past presidents, I hope to identify specific foreign policy issues or dilemmas that typically yield a religious response. Taking the general consensus that religion *does* have a role in foreign policy setting a step further, what follows will include an analysis of *how* religion is implemented, identification and analysis of foreign policy agendas that produced a religious response from the president

¹⁴ Mead, Walter Russell. “God's Country?” Foreign Affairs, September/October 2006 Issue, 1.

and finally a discussion of what the selected case studies tell us about the use of religious responses in U.S. presidencies generally. This essay's sole focus on foreign policy is due to the fact that the president usually holds more unilateral discretion over the direction of foreign policy (at least more so than other areas of presidential purview). The realm of foreign policy was also chosen because of the security component that it encompasses; national security policy has direct correlation to foreign policy. Finally, limiting this analysis to foreign policy will allow for a specific and useful study.

Literature Review

Roles of Religion in Presidential Decision Making

Reviewing scholarly literature and academic studies concerning the role of religion in the setting of the president's foreign policy agenda, there arise several schools of thought. Through a review of the relevant literature, I have determined that these groups include those who propose: (1) that religion serves a traditional role, guiding the president's individual or personal decision making, (2) that religion is implemented by the president as a political tool used to garnish public support for a specific policy or set of policies, (3) that religion is employed by the president to secure peaceful dialogue among hostile or warring parties, (4) that religion is used to divide groups and even generate, renew or increase hostilities.

Religion in a Traditional Role

The concept of religion serving a traditional role, guiding the president's individual or personal decision making with regard to large foreign policy questions, is perhaps the most obvious role that comes to mind when one considers the various roles

that religion can play in foreign policy decision making. There have been many scholars who have suggested that religion has primarily impacted foreign policy in this manner.

Throughout the history of the U.S., there have been Chief Executives who considered themselves religious in this traditional sense and believed that there was a role for religion in foreign policy. While men such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, men of the founding, may or may not have subscribed to a specific religion (there is debate regarding this); they believed strongly in God's Providence and believed that America would serve as a beacon of morality for the rest of the world.¹⁵ Writing in *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Dennis R. Hoover, the journal's Editor, cites his colleague William B. Allen, writing that George Washington believed firmly that for a republican form of government to flourish, a "virtuous character grounded in religion"¹⁶ would need to take root in America. Citing examples which include Washington's 1783 "Circular Address to the Governors of the Thirteen States," 1793 "Proclamation of Neutrality," and his 1796 "Farwell Address," Hoover contends that Allen is asserting that Washington's political thought and foreign policy decisions were shaped by religious thought.¹⁷

Frank Lambert, another colleague of Hoover, states that Thomas Jefferson maintained a belief that America would serve as a "moral beacon in an immoral world"¹⁸ and would be an exceptional nation whose actions were founded in principle.¹⁹ While these presidents presided over the earliest chapter of America, there continue to be

¹⁵ Hoover, Dennis R. "Religion and the Presidents: An Introduction to the Winter 2011 Issue." *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. December 2011, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 1-2.

¹⁶ Ibid, 1-2.

¹⁷ Ibid, 1-2.

¹⁸ Ibid, 1-2.

¹⁹ Ibid, 1-2.

executives who give this role to religion. And while these great men lived during the founding of America, their view of religion and its role in foreign policy are still present in the modern era. Most notably in the presidencies of Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush.

Writing about the presidencies of Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush, D. Jason Berggren and Nicol C. Rae argue that personal evangelical-type faiths play a large role in the directives mandated by U.S. presidents who subscribe to that type of belief.²⁰ Berggren and Rae categorize Carter and Bush as politicians “of a very different deposition,” suggesting that these men were elected by the American public because they were political amateurs and considered “men of faith.”²¹ In essence, the authors argue that the personal religious beliefs held by these men were prominent factors in their rise to office and later in guiding their foreign policy decisions. The authors suggest that political circumstances arise in the United States from time to time, which prompt the public to elect this type of leader; believing their qualities are what is necessary to address the country’s ailments.²² History provides strong support for this argument, as Jimmy Carter was elected following the demonization of President Nixon for his part in the Watergate Scandal and George W. Bush was elected after President Clinton’s affair with Monica Lewinski was exposed. Indeed, each of these men has come to embody a specific brand of foreign policy: Carter and humanitarian/human-rights based-initiatives; Bush and the aptly named Bush Doctrine; each stemming from their personally held faiths. It should be noted that these two presidents had differing personalities, political

²⁰ Berggren D. Jason and Rae, Nicol C. “Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush: Faith, Foreign Policy, and an Evangelical Presidential Style.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. December 2006, Vol. 36, No. 4, 606-607.

²¹ Ibid, 608.

²² Ibid, 608.

views and policy inclinations; yet both ended up advancing a similar foreign policy agenda. Personally maintained religious beliefs lead executives to focus on what the authors refer to as nonmaterial capabilities; which are those that other than the obvious foreign policy tools such as military force and economic superiority.²³ Berggren and Rae offer that morality takes precedent over these aforementioned capabilities in foreign policy decision making when the president is one who draws from his faith.

Religion as a Political Tool

While the previous section discussed the idea of religion in the traditional sense as a guiding force employed by various presidents in an effort to guide their decision making, there also exist instances where religion has been implemented as a purely political tool. When considering the potential roles for religion in the development of foreign policy, this is likely to be another more obvious role that it often identified. Like religion as a traditional tool, there exist a few broad conceptual theories regarding the role of religion as a political tool.

Paul F. Boller, Jr. provides a historical account of religion and its role in U.S. presidencies. While his article primarily focuses on classifying presidents into five primary categories: 1) Born-Again; 2) Churchgoers when assuming office; 3) Churchgoers once attaining office; 4) Churchgoers after leaving office; and 5) Presidents who were never churchgoers, his work provides valuable insight into the role religion has held within the presidency. Boller states that twenty-one presidents were church members upon entering the White House,²⁴ suggesting that these men implemented religion in the “traditional” sense referenced above. He focuses on two particular

²³ Ibid, 617.

²⁴ Boller, Paul. F. “Religion and the US Presidency.” *Journal of Church and State*, Volume 21, Issue 1, 1979, 8.

presidents when examining men who became churchgoers once becoming president; Calvin Coolidge and Dwight D. Eisenhower. His categorizing of these men as examples of presidents taking up religion upon assuming office suggests that these men had a political realization regarding religion; or to put it another way, they saw a that religion could be a useful political tool, capable of allowing them to connect with their constituents.

T. Jeremy Gunn and Mounia Slighoua explore religion as a political tool in foreign policy by examining the presidency of Eisenhower, furthering Boller's suggestion that Eisenhower was among those chiefly employing religion as a political tool. In their essay "The Spiritual Factor: Eisenhower, Religion and Foreign Policy" Gunn and Slighoua agree with Boller that Eisenhower did not subscribe to a religion, writing that in 1952, prior to his run for president, Eisenhower revealed to Billy Graham (the famous preacher) that he was not a subscriber to any religion, that he had never been baptized and that he rarely ever attended any organized religious services.²⁵ The authors suggest that Eisenhower recognized two tremendous benefits that religion – particularly Christianity – provided and they submit that these two benefits were recognized by subsequent administrations throughout the remainder of the Cold War.

The first of these is that religion, particularly the morals, values and general lifestyle it promoted, was beneficial for the direction of the nation as a whole. Gunn and Slighoua write that while campaigning for president, Eisenhower repeatedly stated that fundamental religious values were crucial for a democracy to function properly²⁶ and after taking office did much to advance universal adoption of Christian values. Gunn and

²⁵ Gunn, T. Jeremy and Slighoua, Mounia. "The Spiritual Factor: Eisenhower, Religion and Foreign Policy." *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. December 2011, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 40.

²⁶ Ibid, 41.

Slighoua state that within two weeks of his inauguration, Eisenhower was baptized into the Presbyterian Church²⁷ and followed that up by holding the first ever “Presidential Prayer Breakfast,” now known as the National Prayer Breakfast²⁸. Eisenhower’s actions to promote religion as chronicled by Gunn and Slighoua are in line with previous administrations,²⁹ as they also saw the social value that religion provided to the American public. It is however, the second benefit that Eisenhower saw for religion that holds the most relevance when contemplating religion as a political tool used to effectively implement the president’s foreign policy agenda. The authors write that Eisenhower realized that religion could have a binding effect and had the potential to unite the American people around his aggressive policies regarding communism.³⁰ Throughout the remainder of the Cold War, subsequent presidents continued to use religion, specifically Christianity, as a rallying cry against the evils of communism. This would be readily apparent in the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

Religion as a Peaceful Tool

There are other, less publicized ways that religion can be implemented as a foreign policy tool, particularly by presidents searching for a peaceful outcome to hostilities. Writing in a Special Report published for the United States Institute of Peace, David Smock contemplates the role of religion in world affairs, particularly its role in times of conflict and in times of peace.³¹ Taking a different approach to religion, Smock argues that religion’s ability to promote peace and reconciliation is often overlooked,

²⁷ Ibid, 41.

²⁸ Ibid, 41.

²⁹ Hoover, Dennis R. “Religion and the Presidents: An Introduction to the Winter 2011 Issue.” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. December 2011, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 1-2.

³⁰ Gunn, T. Jeremy and Slighoua, Mounia. “The Spiritual Factor: Eisenhower, Religion and Foreign Policy.” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. December 2011, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 40.

³¹ Smock, David. “Religion in World Affairs: Its Role in Conflict and Peace.” *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report 201, February 2008, 1.

especially by religious leaders, political leaders and institutions that can serve as mediators in a conflict.³² While Smock states that it is “regrettable that the U.S. government is so ill equipped to handle religious issues and relate to religious actors,”³³ I hesitate to place U.S. presidents in this camp, as two strong examples from the late 20th century readily come to mind; President Carter’s role in negotiating the peace treaty between Israel’s Menachem Begin and Egypt’s Anwar El-Sadat³⁴ and President Reagan’s partnering with Pope John Paul II to undermine communism in Eastern Europe. All parties to the Israeli Egyptian Peace Treaty were of different faiths, yet all three men were able to find mutual ground by the end of the peace process because a permanent peace appealed to all three religions, as well as the constituents they represented. Likewise, while President Reagan was not a Catholic, his own religious beliefs were consistent with those held by Pope John Paul II regarding communism.³⁵ Specifically, both men agreed that communism was a moral evil and that victory was the only answer to the threat of communism – accommodation was not possible.³⁶ In each of these examples, the president did not share the same religious ideology that his counterparts held; however, both Carter and Reagan were able to identify shared, core principles that all participating faiths valued.

Smock also argues that it is imperative that religion not be underestimated for its peacemaking ability and that focus shift from what he argues as an overemphasis on

³² Ibid, 1.

³³ Ibid, 1.

³⁴ Carter, Jimmy and El-Sadat, Anwar and Begin, Menachem. “Israeli Egyptian Peace Treaty.” *Vital Speeches of the Day*. April 15, 1979. Vol. 45, No. 13, 386.

³⁵ Edwards, Lee. *Ronald Reagan: A Basic Introduction*. (The Heritage Foundation: 2011), 48-49.

³⁶ Ibid, 48.

religion as a source of conflict to religion as a force for peace.³⁷ Citing the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Smock acknowledges that it is easy to place oneself in the religion as a driver of conflict camp,³⁸ but proposes instead that individuals strive to take a holistic view and look to history for examples of times when religion has led to the successful conclusion of hostilities and the outset of peace. Smock is not alone in arguing for the importance of religion as a tool for peace. Writing in the journal *Peace & Dialogue*, Lilian Curaming states that religion is an extremely powerful force in society and that religious traditions are made up of valuable elements that have the potential to “promote mutual friendship and respect among peoples.”³⁹ Curaming writes that since its inception or beginning, religion has generated growth and communion rather than drive alienation and conflict among people.⁴⁰ She argues that for these reasons, religion is a useful tool in promoting peace on the international state-to-state level.

Religion as a Tool for War

While the concept of religion as a tool for war has arguably been in existence since the formation of organized religion, the subject has received greater scholarly attention since the fall of the Soviet Union. Writing in the *Journal of Peace Research*, Peter S. Henne states that interstate disputes or conflicts regarding religion have increased since the fall of communism, as the world transformed from a bipolar world to a multipolar one.⁴¹ With communism no longer taking center stage with regard to international affairs, the focus has shifted to confrontations among secular states and

³⁷ Smock, David. “Religion in World Affairs: Its Role in Conflict and Peace.” *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report 201, February 2008, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

³⁹ Curaming, Lilian M. "Religion as a motivating force in the pursuit of peace." *Dialogue & Alliance*, Vol. 25, No. 1, June 1, 2011, 35-36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 36.

⁴¹ Henne, Peter S. “The two swords: Religion-state connections and interstate disputes.” *Journal of Peace Research*, November 2012, Vol. 49, No. 6, 753.

religious regimes,⁴² which he argues is problematic because religious regimes feel a heightened perception of threat when confronted and are unwilling to relent or compromise in fear of losing legitimacy.⁴³ What Henne seeks to impart upon the reader is that religion has become a war cry since the fall of communism and has arguably resulted in the conflicts of the past decade in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A similar notion is advanced by David G. Kibble in his 2002 essay, “The Attacks of 9/11: Evidence of a Clash of Religions?” In his essay, Kibble writes that while President Bush believed that he was not fighting a religious war, he was in actuality doing just that – without knowing it.⁴⁴ The perception that President Bush launched a religious war in declaring the war on terror is also often linked to the Bush Doctrine, the former president’s foreign policy agenda. While the Bush Doctrine has been subject to much scrutiny and has been described in a variety of ways, it has notably been labeled “democratic realism,” “national security liberalism,” “democratic globalism” and “messianic universalism,”⁴⁵ the last of which suggests a Christian undertone or theme. What Andrew Fiala is referencing appears to be identical to what Kibble is suggesting in his essay: That President Bush’s declaration of the war on terror signaled the dawn of the Bush Doctrine; a set of policies aimed at eliminating terrorists through all available U.S. means and the establishment of democratic institutions founded upon Christian principles not unlike those maintained in the U.S.

⁴² Ibid, 756.

⁴³ Ibid, 756.

⁴⁴ Kibble, David G. “The Attacks of 9/11: Evidence of a Clash of Religions?” *Parameters*, Autumn 2002, Vol. 32, No. 3, 34-45.

⁴⁵ Fiala, Andrew. “The Bush Doctrine, Democratization and Humanitarian Intervention: A Just War Critique.” *Theoria: A Journal of Social & Political Theory*, December 2007, Vol. 54, No. 114, 28.

Though some subtle differences exist, there is considerable overlap here, as the implementation of religion as a tool for war in the realm of foreign policy contains many of the similarities and characteristics as religion implemented as a political tool. In essence, the difference primarily exists in the context in which the mandate or decision is made.

Religion in Promoting Monumental Policy

To this point, the various roles that religion can play in foreign policy decision making have been introduced and discussed, and examples have been given in order to illustrate for the reader how these roles have been applied in reality, not simply just in theory. Thorough discussion of these roles begs the following questions: (1) Why should we expect religion to play a role in the promotion of foreign policy? and (2) Is it surprising that religion is often given such credence in a secular nation?

The answer to the first question is that we should expect religion to play a role in the promotion of foreign policy agendas when they are monumental in nature. By monumental I mean policies or agendas aimed at exacting or producing an intentional change or shift in policy through direct or indirect American intervention. Religion is a powerful force, and politicians have found that religion is a persuasive tool, useful in not only binding the public together behind an initiative, but also useful in securing a high degree of credibility – credibility which allows executives to pursue aggressive policies which they otherwise would not be able to pursue. This is especially attractive to politicians as credibility is the highest form of political currency.

Michelle Gonzalez discusses this in her essay “Religion and the U.S. Presidency: Politics, The Media, and Religious Identity.” In this work, she states that scholars have

come to categorize the political action described above as “theolegal democracy,” which is a rapprochement that takes place when theology transforms into a political commodity.⁴⁶ Gonzalez is essentially suggesting that if religion is harnessed under the correct circumstances, it can be converted into a form of political currency that a politician is then able to spend with little resistance or significant blowback from the American people. Gonzalez elaborates further, stating that “...religion can be used to manipulate and change perceptions about how the United States acts as a nation” and that “...religion can come dangerously close to as embodying God’s will.”⁴⁷

To put it succinctly, it essentially provides the president with a blank check with which to finance his foreign policy plans. If the president is able to sell the American public on a particular foreign policy on religious grounds – suggesting that his proposed plan is close to “God’s will” or at least a very well intentioned policy and will produce results that everyone will like – he has in essence accumulated the credibility needed to see his policy implemented and realized. Therefore (to answer the second question) it should not be surprising that religion – when converted into political currency – is often used to sell monumental foreign policy initiatives to the American public.

This of course, is not how everyone feels, as there are those who would expect religion to play absolutely no role in the promotion of foreign policy initiatives. The obvious counter argument is that religion is not the unifying force that others have portrayed it as; it is instead a divisive element that has the ability to drive people and groups apart because it is ultimately a matter of personal preference. Furthermore, as a matter of personal preference, religion often becomes a sensitive issue with people which

⁴⁶ Gonzalez, Michelle A. “Religion and the US Presidency: Politics, The Media and Religious Identity.” *Political Theology*, October 2012, Vol. 13, No. 5, 571.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 572.

lead many to strongly believe that religion has no place in the public arena. Many in this camp would also point out that the U.S. is a secular nation, and demand a strict “separation of church and state” interpretation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, disregarding the fact that the Founding Fathers saw as religion as a force for good and essential to the success of the U.S.⁴⁸

Received Knowledge

Why Are Religious Roles Selected?

A review of a sampling of the vast amounts of scholarly work dedicated to the subject has revealed that the role of religion in foreign policy has been studied to a considerable extent, especially since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Scholars along the academic and political spectrum have contributed sound analysis which has effectively distinguished the various roles that religion can be afforded by a U.S. president when he is attempting to generate support for his policy preferences. With regard to foreign policy, we have learned that religion has great range. Depending on preference, the president can tap into his personal beliefs, choose religion for the sake of political expediency, or provide religion with a platform for its ability to either incite or garner support.

However, in my opinion, there exists a general deficiency in the examination of why these religious roles are selected. The cataloging of roles and their examination in the literature review was necessary so that we can begin to discover why roles are selected. In order to determine why roles are selected, we first had to gain an understanding of what the major roles that religion can be afforded are. Having identified the major roles, we can now start the process of determining why roles are

⁴⁸ Bradley, Gerard V. *Religious Liberty in the American Republic*. (The Heritage Foundation: 2008), 3.

selected; with specific attention paid to foreign policy initiatives. In order to accomplish this, we need only look to the past; specifically, to the historical context within which the then-president attempted to influence (foreign) policy. By examining the historical period – to include a variety of influences, such as upbringing, exposure to religion(s), social movements and political climate – we can infer why religion was provided the role it was afforded.

Through the case studies selected, I aim to examine U.S. presidents – and specific foreign policy initiatives pursued by their respective administrations – with the hope that we will be able to identify religious roles and why those specific roles were put to use. In doing so, we hope to identify historical trends; trends that are capable of providing us with explanatory power.

Theory & Hypothesis

Religion as a Driver vs Religion as Determinant

Based upon the theories presented herein regarding the role of religion with regard to foreign policy, and contemplating in broad terms how such conceptual theories can be applied to presidential decision making, I argue U.S. presidents determine the role that they afford religion in foreign policy; religion does not determine or *dictate* its own role. Rather, religion serves as a *driver*, driving forth policies the president wishes to implement both domestically and internationally. The manner in which this driver is deployed is chosen by the president; he determines which of the examined roles to deploy, either (1) giving voice to his personal beliefs, (2) implementing religion for the sake of political expediency, as certain situations exist where religion can be used as a mechanism by which popular favor can be won, (3) using religion as a tool for peace, or

(4) using religion as a tool for war. It has been tempting in the past to simply conclude that a president's individual religious beliefs have influenced policy decision making, and while there is some truth to this, it is only part of the story. I suggest that while personal religious belief may affect decision making with regard to foreign policy, I would go one step further and offer that presidents typically issue a religious response when facing the opportunity to significantly change or alter affairs. As foreign affairs are the focus of this paper, we will look to supply examples primarily from the international arena.

This is not to suggest that personal religious beliefs do not play a substantial role when a president chooses to follow this course; a president's personal religious beliefs can actually be highlighted or given a greater voice in a specific role if the right circumstances exist. At this point, it is important for me to state that my study of the topic has led me to interpreting that all presidents – even those who profess possessing a strong set of religious beliefs – deploy religion throughout their presidency to serve an explicitly political purpose. I submit that most U.S. presidents (certainly those of the 20th and 21st centuries) have deployed religion in politically expedient ways; and that a select few have solely deployed religion as strictly a political tool.

My hypothesis is that presidents provide religion with multiple roles within one administration, dropping one role and picking up another when it is advantageous to them or to the advancement of their particular political agenda. Furthermore, I believe that presidents gain a greater proclivity for this when attempting to advance a monumental foreign policy move or decision. When attempting to advance an agenda viewed or perceived as monumental, presidents will use strong religious rhetoric, hoping to appeal or tap into the strong, shared emotion held by the majority of the American public.

Methodology

Decision Analysis

To demonstrate what I have outlined above, I will examine the presidencies of Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan, specifically focusing on monumental foreign policy decisions and initiatives. These two presidents have been selected as the case studies for this thesis because I find them to be highly representative of all U.S. presidents. Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat and father of the modern progressive movement, was a wartime president, having guided the U.S. through World War I. In doing so, he made crucial foreign policy decisions; decisions which included his Fourteen Points and League of Nations.⁴⁹ Wilson, a self-professed religious man and son of a Presbyterian minister,⁵⁰ was profoundly affected by World War I and his decision making bears this out. Additionally, Wilson's presidency marks a significant time in American history, as the U.S. came to be recognized as a world power towards the conclusion of his presidency.

The presidency of Ronald Reagan also serves as a useful case study, as the initiatives of his presidency serve as a counter to those of Wilson. Reagan, a Republican and a staunch conservative, represents the other side of the political spectrum. Like Wilson, he too had notable foreign policy agendas, and he sought to implement seemingly radical or monumental policies or changes. Most notably of course were the policies associated with the Reagan Doctrine, a set of policies aimed at dismantling the

⁴⁹ Whitney, David C. *The American Presidents*. (Guild America Books: 2005), 254.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 241.

Soviet Union.⁵¹ Like Wilson, Reagan sought out public support for his foreign policies, and like Wilson, he delivered speeches filled with religious undertones, hoping to appeal to America's best hopes, not their worst fears. Reagan's single most monumental act of course was his role in dismantling the Soviet Union, sharply reducing the threat imposed by communism and winning the Cold War.⁵²

To test the stated hypothesis, I will provide an analysis of specific decisions made with regard to foreign policy and present evidence testing that the president in question *determined* the role (or roles) that religion would play in the decision or policy; therefore dispelling the belief that personal religious beliefs solely *dictate* the direction/implementation of policy. Evidence supporting my hypothesis will show that both Wilson and Reagan – men of significant faith – provided religion with various roles when administering foreign policy agendas; and will even include shifting the role within one specific policy. We will be able to detect that Wilson and Reagan *determined the role* of religion rather than religion simply *assuming a different role* by examining the context in which the change occurred. Each time the role is changed or adapted, it is done in response to a major event or policy alteration, which necessitates the need for a different role.

Data

Woodrow Wilson

As stated above, the presidency of Woodrow Wilson serves as a useful case study for examining how a president can adapt the role of religion to suit his foreign policy inclinations. President Wilson often professed his belief that the US has been chosen by

⁵¹ Ibid, 447.

⁵² Edwards, Lee. *Ronald Reagan: A Basic Introduction*. (The Heritage Foundation: 2011), 79.

Providence “to show the way to the nations of the world how they shall walk in paths of liberty,”⁵³ and his foreign policy decision making certainly bears this out. As discussed in the Literature Review portion of this thesis, Wilson was tremendously influenced by his faith. Following the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, John Maynard Keynes stated that Wilson conducted himself like a Presbyterian minister “with all the strengths and weaknesses of that manner of thinking.”⁵⁴ Before making significant foreign policy decisions – decisions that would impact the outcome of World War I – Wilson did not hide from the public that religion would be the centerpiece of his presidency. In his second inaugural address, given in March 1917, approximately one month before the U.S. would formally enter World War I,⁵⁵ President Wilson declared:

“I need not argue these principles to you, my fellow countrymen; they are your own part and parcel of your own thinking and your own motives in affairs. They spring up native amongst us. Upon this as a platform of purpose and of action we can stand together. *And it is imperative that we should stand together. We are being forged into a new unity amidst the fires that now blaze throughout the world. In their ardent heat we shall, in God's Providence, let us hope, be purged of faction and division, purified of the errant humors of party and of private interest, and shall stand forth in the days to come with a new dignity of national pride and spirit. Let each man see to it that the dedication is in his own heart,*

⁵³ Andrew, Christopher. *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*. HarperCollins Publishers, New York: 1995, 30.

⁵⁴ Magee, Malcolm. “Woodrow Wilson, Wilsonianism, and the Idealism of Faith.” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. December 2011, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 29.

⁵⁵ Office of the Historian, “Milestones: 1914-1920,” US Department of State. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/wwi> (December 5, 2013).

the high purpose of the nation in his own mind, ruler of his own will and desire.”⁵⁶ (emphasis added)

The excerpt taken above from Wilson’s Second Inaugural Address is significant because while Wilson is deploying religion – as one may expect, based upon his stated affinity for his own religious beliefs – he appears to be deviating from the traditional role of religion that he is typically assigned; instead incorporating the role of religion as a tool for war. The religious language in this passage is evident, as many of these words as well as the context in which they are used are found within the Bible. Statements such as “God’s Providence,” “purged of faction and division,” and words like “purified” invoke a religious connotation. In the excerpt above, Wilson is acknowledging that war is coming to the U.S. and is in essence attempting to appeal to his fellow countrymen that the American principles they hold dear dictate that the nation must stand united and brace for entrance into World War I. Wilson is appealing to American principles as well as “national pride and spirit,” hoping to “...create a new unity amidst the fires that now blaze throughout the world.”

Wilson appears to have laid the foundation for this speech just a few months earlier when delivering remarks to the Senate in January 1917. This address, now known as his “Peace Without Victory” speech, captures this same message and again serves an example of President Wilson deploying themes of religion and religious rhetoric as tools for war:

⁵⁶ Wilson, Woodrow. “Second Inaugural Address.” *Woodrow Wilson: Second Inaugural Address* (January 9, 2009): 1. *Military & Government Collection*, EBSCOhost (December 5, 2013).

*“It is inconceivable that the people of the United States should play no part in that great enterprise. To take part in such a service will be the opportunity for which they have sought to prepare themselves by the very principles and purposes of their polity and the approved practices of their Government ever since the days when they set up a new nation in the high and honourable hope that it might in all that it was and did show mankind the way to liberty. They cannot in honour withhold the service to which they are now about to be challenged. They do not wish to withhold it.”*⁵⁷ (emphasis added)

These remarks by Wilson are very similar to those he delivered just a few months later in March 1917. The choice of language, the underlying themes, the president’s strong appeal to American principles and beliefs – all strongly suggest that Wilson sought to impart the immediateness and seriousness of the impending war – which only religion could provide. Realizing the gravity of what confronted not only the U.S., but the reminder of the world – which was fighting the most gruesome and destructive war to date – Wilson deployed religious rhetoric in an effort to bind the nation together in a cohesive war effort.

Wilson’s attempt to appeal to uniquely American principles was a subtle way of appealing to relatively commonly held religious beliefs; an act that itself is not unique in the history of the U.S. Indeed, this practice has been used by other administrations; however, it is Wilson’s usage of religion in this regard which is unique because it represents a clear break his own religious ideology – that religion is a guiding force. While these particular instances suggest that Wilson adapted the

⁵⁷ Wilson, Woodrow. “Address of the Senate on Peace Without Victory,” January 22, 1917. Online by *The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library*, <http://wwl2.dataformat.com/Document.aspx?doc=30688> (December 5, 2013).

role of religion in his presidential decision making, these two closely linked instances hardly establish a verifiable trend. Examining remarks made by President Wilson as World War I drew to a close, one can again see that Wilson adapted the role of religion to suit his policy initiatives and accomplish endeavors that he personally considered monumental.

Perhaps the most monumental foreign policy endeavor undertaken by President Wilson aside from guiding America through World War I was his role in personally leading the effort to craft a lasting peace afterward. While his efforts ultimately failed as the Treaty of Versailles and the accompanying US place in the League of Nations died on the Senate floor - having been voted down twice⁵⁸ - Wilson remained confident throughout the remainder of his life that the American public wanted such a peace and that he alone was called by God to secure it. His own deep religious views – which included his deeply seeded belief that he was chosen by God to lead the world’s nations to freedom⁵⁹ – as well as the fact that he opted to solely represent the U.S. at the peace delegation without representatives from either the U.S. Senate nor the House of Representatives, bears this out.⁶⁰ Addressing the Peace Conference on January 25, 1919, Wilson stated:

“You can imagine, gentlemen, I dare say, the sentiments and the purpose with which representatives of the United States support this great project for a league of nations. We regard it as the keystone of the whole program which expressed our purposes and ideals in this war and which the associated nations have

⁵⁸ Whitney, David C. *The American Presidents*. (GuildAmerica Books: 2005). p254-255.

⁵⁹ Flores, Alfred. “Malcolm D. Magee. What the World Should Be: Woodrow Wilson and the Crafting of a Faith-Based Foreign Policy.” Vol. 12, No. 2, 458-487. *EconLit with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (December 5, 2013).

⁶⁰ Whitney, David C. *The American Presidents*. (GuildAmerica Books: 2005). 254-255.

accepted as the basis of the settlement. If we returned to the United States without having made every effort in our power to realize this program, we should return to meet the merited scorn of our fellow citizens. For they are a body that constitutes a great democracy. They expect their leaders to speak their thoughts and no private purpose of their own. They expect their representatives to be their servants. We have no choice but to obey their mandate.”⁶¹ (emphasis added)

From these remarks it is clear that Wilson believed that the American people fully supported the peace that he was seeking and that he was perfectly attuned to their needs, capable of representing them at the highest level. Towards the end of his remarks, President Wilson references the American soldiers who fought in the war, suggesting that they willingly went to war after “we had uttered our purposes”⁶²; those purposes being that the U.S. joined the war to “end all wars” and to serve as principle architect of the permanent peace afterward. However, Wilson references the U.S. soldiers in unique fashion:

“They came as *crusaders*, not merely to win a war, but to win a cause; and I am responsible to them, for it fell to me to formulate the purposes for which I asked them to fight, and I, like them, must be a crusader for these things, whatever the costs and whatever it may be necessary to do...”⁶³ (emphasis added)

Reference to American soldiers as “crusaders” again carries a certain religious connotation, as does Wilson’s own reference to himself as a fellow “crusader” who is

⁶¹ Wilson, Woodrow. “Address at the Peace Conference, Paris France,” January 25, 1919. Online by *The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library*, <http://wwl2.dataformat.com/Document.aspx?doc=27909> (December 5, 2013).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

attempting to secure the purpose of their case “whatever the costs.” When the reader considers the passage above with Malcolm Magee’s report that Wilson was personally called by God to go to Versailles and alone negotiate the peace⁶⁴, one can come away with the sense that Wilson perhaps saw himself as a modern-day messiah. The fact that he deeply believed that he alone was to see such a monumental undertaking through to completion, no matter the consequences, definitely bears a Christ-like resemblance. Similarly, Magee references a poem written by Edward Park Davis comparing Wilson’s second inauguration to the second coming of Christ; a poem which likens Wilson’s speech to that of the “human man” and his thoughts to those of “living God.”⁶⁵ Wilson apparently appreciated being mentioned as “David” and the “High Priest” (other references to Wilson from Davis’ poem), as he wrote the poet, thanking him by stating that the poem had “touched me more than I know how to say.”⁶⁶

Wilson was dismayed to arrive back in the U.S. in July 1919 only to find no support for his planned peace.⁶⁷ From negotiating at the peace conference until his death in February 1924,⁶⁸ Wilson maintained the belief that he was the moral leader of the world and that one day, perhaps after his time, the U.S. would join the League of Nations and that he alone had been called to lead the world’s nations to freedom.⁶⁹

Wilson is often regarded in presidential histories as a Chief Executive who evenly and thoroughly applied his deeply held religious beliefs in a principled

⁶⁴ Magee, Malcolm. “Woodrow Wilson, Wilsonianism, and the Idealism of Faith.” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. December 2011, Vol. 9, Issue 4, 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 35.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 35.

⁶⁷ Whitney, David C. *The American Presidents*. (GuildAmerica Books: 2005), 254.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 255.

⁶⁹ Flores, Alfred. “Malcolm D. Magee. What the World Should Be: Woodrow Wilson and the Crafting of a Faith-Based Foreign Policy.” Vol. 12, No. 2, 458-487. *EconLit with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (December 5, 2013).

manner. From the analysis above, it is clear that these religious beliefs influenced his decision making, especially those pertaining to the administration of US foreign policy. It is also evident that the rhetoric he delivered in order to sway the American public of these policies often carried religious undertones. However, from the analysis presented above, one can see that the role President Wilson gave to religion in foreign policy was more varied and not as consistent as most histories would have the reader believe. Contrary to popular belief, Woodrow Wilson provided religion with various roles throughout his administration, adapting the role to suit his policy needs.

Ronald Reagan

If Woodrow Wilson represents the political “left,” Ronald Reagan serves as a strong counter, representing the political “right.” Representing the other portion of the political spectrum and also having served as a wartime president (albeit a “cold” war), Ronald Reagan serves as a useful case study for anyone seeking to understand how religion can be deployed in multiple roles in order to accomplish foreign policy initiatives. Like Wilson, religion played a critical role throughout Reagan’s Administration; as he too delivered religious responses when confronted with monumental foreign policy issues.

These initiatives of course all center on communism, which was recognized as the great evil of the post-war era. Ronald Reagan was not one to shy away from his convictions, especially those regarding communism, which he considered a moral evil and an unnatural phenomenon.⁷⁰ Before entering politics – much less ascending to the presidency – citizen Reagan vehemently condemned communism; particularly the brand promoted by the Soviet Union. In 1964, speaking on behalf of Republican presidential

⁷⁰ Edwards, Lee. *Ronald Reagan: A Basic Introduction*. (The Heritage Foundation: 2011), 48.

nominee Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan warned against the proposed policy of accommodation, putting forth publicly his hardline stance on communism; a stance that was fundamentally fused to his own religious beliefs. Warning of accommodation, he said:

“...there is a simple answer—not an easy answer— but simple: If you and I have the courage to tell our elected officials that we want our national policy based on what we know in our hearts is morally right. We cannot buy our security, our freedom from the threat of the bomb by *committing an immorality so great as saying to a billion human beings now enslaved behind the Iron Curtain, “Give up your dreams of freedom because to save our own skins, we’re willing to make a deal with your slave masters.”* Alexander Hamilton said, “A nation which can prefer disgrace to danger is prepared for a master, and deserves one.” Now let’s set the record straight. There’s no argument over the choice between peace and war, but there’s only one guaranteed way you can have peace—and you can have it in the next second—surrender.”⁷¹ (emphasis added)

Here, in 1964, Reagan made it clear that he found communism reprehensible on moral grounds; a view that historians have linked to the fact that his strong political views were rooted in the Judeo-Christian values he maintained throughout his life.⁷² Reagan explicitly links the aforementioned remarks on civil morality with religious belief when advocating the faith-based foreign policy of Barry Goldwater (which he

⁷¹ Reagan, Ronald. “A Time for Choosing,” October 27, 1964. Online by: *The Heritage Foundation*, <http://www.heritage.org/initiatives/first-principles/primary-sources/a-time-for-choosing-ronald-reagan-enters-the-political-stage> (December 6, 2013).

⁷² Holmes, David L. *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers*. Oxford University Press: 2006, 174.

advocated himself by endorsing). In the same set of remarks, when describing the foundation of Goldwater's foreign policy, Reagan quotes Goldwater:

“There is no foundation like the rock of honesty and fairness, and when you begin to build your life on that rock, *with the cement of the faith in God that you have*, then you have a real start.”⁷³ (emphasis added)

In the overall context of this speech, Reagan appears to be providing religion a traditional voice while making his foreign policy recommendations; in essence he is suggesting that commonly held Christian beliefs be integrated into the nation's national policy and guide her conduct abroad.

Towards the closing of his remarks, Ronald Reagan again explicitly references religion and religious imagery when establishing his hardline stance towards the Soviet Union. Further deriding the policy of accommodation (appeasement), Reagan states:

“You and I know and do not believe that life is so dear and peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery. If nothing in life is worth dying for, when did this begin – just in the face of this enemy? *Or should Moses have told the children of Israel to live in slavery under the pharaohs? Should Christ have refused the cross?*”⁷⁴ (emphasis added)

These remarks contain clear references to religious figures and in citing them during his remarks, Reagan is hoping to appeal to those in the U.S. who identify with

⁷³ Reagan, Ronald. “A Time for Choosing,” October 27, 1964. Online by: *The Heritage Foundation*, <http://www.heritage.org/initiatives/first-principles/primary-sources/a-time-for-choosing-ronald-reagan-enters-the-political-stage> (December 6, 2013).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

such religious teachings – or at least those with familiarity with these Biblical figures.

Reagan maintained this stance on communism after winning the presidency in 1980, and he continued to provide religion a similar role when describing his strategy for how the U.S. would engage with communism. President Reagan put his strategy into practice in 1982 when he visited Pope John Paul II in Rome; a trip that he took in order to work with the Pope on efforts to combat communism in Poland.⁷⁵ On this highly visible trip, Reagan arranged to provide an estimated \$50 million to the Pope's papal funds, intended to support clandestine actions in Poland.⁷⁶ This act –which included trust and collaboration with a religious leader – again illustrates the appreciation and inclination that Reagan exhibited early into his presidency for giving religion a prominent role in the execution of his foreign policy aims.

Following his remarks in 1964 and his trip to the Vatican to visit Pope John Paul II in 1982, Reagan addressed the National Association of Evangelicals in 1983, stating:

“...they must understand that we will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. *We will never abandon our belief in God.* And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace.”

“...let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness – pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipresence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all

⁷⁵ Edwards, Lee. *Ronald Reagan: A Basic Introduction*. (The Heritage Foundation: 2011), 49.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 49.

people of the Earth, *they are the focus of evil in the modern world.*”⁷⁷ (emphasis added)

From the excerpts of his “Evil Empire” speech, it seems as though President Reagan built upon the moral argument against communism that he presented to the American people in 1964 and reinforced it. Certainly he is advocating a traditional role for religion in dismantling the largest obstacle America faced from a foreign policy perspective: communism. While Reagan is again providing religion with a traditional role in this speech, a shift would occur shortly thereafter with the public introduction of the Reagan Doctrine.

Seeking a more forceful and confrontational approach to dealing with the Soviet Union, Reagan proposed a foreign policy doctrine that advocated overt, kinetic military action and unrestricted support of anti-communist forces.⁷⁸ This foreign policy agenda, known as the Reagan Doctrine, sought to add a strong and obvious component to the covert and subtle policies that were already in place. This pairing led to series of foreign policy endeavors which included the funding of the Contras in Nicaragua, the U.S.-led invasion of Grenada and intervention in Lebanon.⁷⁹ In launching this new initiative, President Reagan tweaked the role of religion; shifting it from the traditional role that it had enjoyed earlier in his presidency to the role of political tool, seeking to win and maintain public support for his administration’s foreign policies. Following the bombing of the American barracks in Beirut,

⁷⁷ Reagan, Ronald. “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida,” March 8, 1983. Online by: *The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation*, http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Remarks_Annual_Convention_National_Association_Evangelicals_030883.pdf (December 6, 2013).

⁷⁸ Edwards, Lee. *Ronald Reagan: A Basic Introduction*. (The Heritage Foundation: 2011), 44.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 45 & 51.

Lebanon, Reagan delivered an address to the American public aimed at informing the nation of the bombing in Lebanon, alleviating the nation's fears and consoling those grieving the American loss of life. Using the first portion of his address to accomplish these aims, Reagan used the second portion to answer the American public's question: Why were our forces in harm's way?

"If we turned our backs on Lebanon now, what would be the future of Israel?

...If terrorism and intimidation succeed, it'll be a devastating blow to the peace process and to Israel's search for genuine security. It won't just be Lebanon sentenced to a future of chaos. Can the United States, or the free world, for that matter, stand by and see the Middle East incorporated into the Soviet bloc?

...We're a nation with global responsibilities. We're not somewhere else in the world protecting someone else's interests; we're there protecting our own."⁸⁰

From these remarks, the reader can see that Reagan is trying to reinforce his policy of U.S. intervention in the Middle East. He is also attempting to persuade the American public that the sacrifices already made must not be in vain; that the U.S. must persevere if change is to be exacted in the Middle East. Israel is referenced in the selected series of quotes above, but Israel is mentioned throughout the president's address and he suggests that the alliance between the U.S. and Israel is one based upon shared principles, beliefs, morals and standards. Regarding Israel, Reagan states that "Since 1948 our Nation has recognized and accepted a moral obligation to assure the continued existence of Israel as a nation. Israel shares our democratic values..."⁸¹ Referencing Israel in this regard,

⁸⁰ Reagan, Ronald. "Address to the Nation on Events in Lebanon and Grenada," October 27, 1983. *The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan*. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/102783b.htm> (December 6, 2013).

⁸¹ Ibid.

President Reagan is deploying the subtle side of his doctrine and is giving religion a traditional role, again albeit subtle. Reagan continues in this vein, but also mixes in the second portion of the Reagan Doctrine, supporting the U.S. troops affected and calling on U.S. citizens to do the same:

“ They were not afraid to stand up for their country or, no matter how difficult and slow the journey might be, to give to others that last, best hope of a better future. We cannot and will not dishonor them now and *the sacrifices they've made by failing to remain as faithful to the cause of freedom and the pursuit of peace as they have been.*”⁸² (emphasis added)

In this passage, Reagan is referencing the overt and kinetic; the sacrifices made by the military to accomplish the policy goals that he has laid forth. By referencing this, Reagan is appealing to the American public that the task, though difficult, must be pursued and that the goal of peace and freedom must be attained. Using this language, President Reagan is attempting to secure public support. The religious tones here are subtle and generalized and in part relate to civil morality, but they are present and effective. By calling Americans to be “faithful to the cause of freedom,” and faithful to the ideals held by Marines killed in action,⁸³ Reagan is using religion – specifically religious tones – as a political tool; hoping to maintain public support for his administration’s intervention in the Middle East.

From his entrance into politics until the end of the Cold War, Ronald Reagan continued to condemn communism on moral grounds and often appealed to the Judeo-Christian faith that was prevalent throughout the U.S. in order to find support for his

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

initiatives. Later, as the Cold War was heating up just before going cold forever, Reagan altered the role he gave religion in foreign policy, using it as a political tool to win support and advance his more confrontational and kinetic policies. Like Wilson, Reagan is often remembered for a particular stance on religion and for providing it with a particular role in his application of foreign policy. However, analysis has again shown that Ronald Reagan also adapted the role of religion with regard to foreign policy, switching between roles in order to advance specific aims.

Discussion

After analyzing notable speeches regarding major foreign policy initiatives given by both Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan, I found that both presidents provided religion different roles throughout their presidencies, adapting them in order to craft and support policies aimed at producing monumental outcomes. Examining major foreign policy agendas and goals promoted by President Wilson, I determined that Wilson deployed religion as a tool for war, later shifting the role to the traditional role of religion as a guiding force. President Reagan likewise varied the role that religion held with regard to foreign policy, as he shifted from the religion in its traditional role to religion as a political tool. The speeches examined by both presidents and the foreign policy agendas that these speeches aimed at propelling forward were chosen because they represent each president's significant or monumental agendas.

I believe that the case studies selected demonstrated that religion can hold multiple roles in a president's foreign policy agenda, even in presidencies as polarizing as Wilson's and Reagan's. Analyses of these two presidencies has shown that the role of religion can change, based upon presidential preference and that the Chief Executive can

put forth a religious response when they perceive that it will advance their policy interests. In the example of Wilson, he deployed religious rhetoric in an effort to unite the nation in preparation for entrance into World War I; certainly a monumental decision, and even more so when considering the context of the early 20th century (the U.S. had not been a participant in a conflict that large with so much potentially at stake). Reagan likewise deployed religion in an effort to advance policies aimed at defeating communism and dismantling the Soviet Union, the only world power posing a threat to the US, which also represents a “monumental” undertaking.

The case studies of Presidents Wilson and Reagan were compatible with my stated hypothesis, which is that U.S. presidents determine the role that they give religion in foreign policy; religion does not determine or *dictate* its own role. It is important to note that while both Wilson and Reagan maintained deeply held religious beliefs (especially Wilson), they were effective managers of their own beliefs. By this I mean that they chose when to give voice to their personal beliefs; they allowed them to come through in speeches to the American public only when they decided doing so would be beneficial. Religion did not *dictate* a role with either president; they instead deployed religion in a way that would advance their political agendas.

President Wilson and President Reagan were chosen because I found them to be very representative of other administrations. Selecting one democrat and one republican was obvious, but it was important to select individuals who were representative of the two dominant political ideologies that exist in the U.S.; therefore, selecting the most polarizing individuals of the modern progressive and conservative movements, respectively. While both Wilson and Reagan were certainly polarizing men in both word

and deed, I believe that they are also representative of presidents who are not remembered as particularly memorable or polarizing. Perhaps the single largest reason for this is that both men were political upstarts, as neither ever had any intention of joining politics – let alone being remembered for contributions made while they were in office. Woodrow Wilson had been an academic most of his professional career, teaching at the university level for nearly 30 years.⁸⁴ Ronald Reagan, born in 1911, was a famous movie and television actor for the first half of his life, not entering politics until he became Governor of California in 1967.⁸⁵ Before their respective starts in politics, each man was a citizen who aspired to engage in something other than politics; it was not until much later in life, when moved by powerful events, that these men decided to become public servants. Both Wilson and Reagan spent much of their lives as political outsiders – as American citizens – and therefore had ordinary experiences that make them relatable to other men to have held that office.

While both of the carefully selected and highly representative case studies selected supported my hypothesis, it is important to note that additional research in this area would be necessary to definitely establish any existing trends. However, the research contained in this thesis serves as a useful starting point and has laid a foundation for additional research in this area.

Conclusion

In closing, I believe that I have answered the question I presented at the outset of this paper: *What roles can religion play in the creation of the president's foreign policy agenda; can these roles change, and do executives submit a religious response when*

⁸⁴ Whitney, David C. *The American Presidents*. (GuildAmerica Books: 2005), 240.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 435.

confronted with specific foreign policy issues? My research has shown that religion can play a prominent role in the president's foreign policy agenda, and that the role is constantly adapted – even by more polarizing presidents who historically have been depicted differently. I believe that I also illustrated that religion's role is *determined* by the president; it is not *dictated*. Personal inclinations certainly play a role, but they are not the whole story. Personally held religious beliefs certainly play a role, but the influence this has is often determined by what is politically expedient.

I think that this research has been useful in allowing people to see that polarizing presidents – even those as polarizing as Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan – are more multidimensional than most people give them credit for. Countless histories have been produced on these extraordinary men; and many of these histories are lacking in that they simply peg Wilson a “progressive democrat” and Reagan as “a champion of modern conservatism.” Few histories address these men's religious views and even less address the role that religion played in their decision making as it pertained to foreign policy. Both of these men presided over incredibly significant phases of American history; Wilson over World War I and America's rise to the ranks of world-class hegemon; Reagan over the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Moving forward, I think that if U.S. presidents and their foreign policy decision making is studied from this perspective, that one can develop a new appreciation for the leaders of our nation's past.

Grounded in Reality:
The Call for a Geopolitical Foreign Policy

Matthew Rolfes

Research & Thesis II

Introduction

America is often referred to as the world's indispensable nation; a title that has invited both praise and criticism abroad. While the validity of that generality can be argued, one cannot dispute that the United States has continually championed values synonymous with our way of life, to include individual freedom consistent with law and order, and self-determination. Forming the foundation of civil society, the defense of these values worldwide is in America's best interest. To advance and uphold these values, it is important that a carefully constructed and thoughtful foreign policy strategy be assembled. U.S. foreign policy is not only a set of mandates that apply to people beyond our shores; rather, they are an extension of who we are.

As such, it is imperative that policymakers and strategists agree upon a framework for identifying threats to definitive U.S. interests and recognize the benefits associated with the development of a foreign policy strategy rooted in geopolitical thought. While the defense of the aforementioned values may suggest a foreign policy rooted in liberalism – a theory revolving predominantly around values – U.S. foreign policy *must* take into account the limitations associated with our form of limited government; it must also account for the unescapable realities of our world.

Our resources, though vast, are not endless; a grim reality that is constantly broadcast by our own government. This, paired with waning public interest in events abroad brought on by over a decade of war, have led to calls for a less engaged America. Some have called for the pursuit of a “peace dividend,” and for a more inward-looking America. But history has not been kind to nations who have eschewed their commitments and responsibilities in favor of such a dividend. Retrenchment of this nature is dangerous

and irresponsible; it diminishes our standing, leads to increased insecurity, and emboldens foes. We hypothesize that American security can be restored and national interests better secured by formulating a foreign policy rooted in geopolitical thought.

To make this case, it is necessary to first gain an understanding of what geopolitics is and is not. By completing this fundamental yet necessary chore, we can then examine the field of geopolitics in order to select the geopolitical theory that contains the greatest explanatory power.

Geopolitics is probably best described as the study of the rise and fall of nations in their constant quest for greater power relative to each other. Sir Halford Mackinder, perhaps the most influential thinker on the subject, suggested that geopolitics was the “...survival of men within the order of civilization.”⁸⁶ As much, he explained the intrinsic relationship between geography and history in order to explain state-to-state interaction:

*[It was] once remarked that the geographer thinks of shapes. Might we not complete the idea with the statement that the true historian thinks in movements – movements upon the shapes of the geographer? Both of them see with the mind's eye.*⁸⁷

Mackinder's insistence on the primacy of both history and geography suggests that these two important aspects be kept in mind during our analysis. A British geographer who was immensely influential on those tasked with crafting the strategic

⁸⁶ Mackinder, Halford John, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1962, xv.

⁸⁷ Mackinder, Halford John., *The Development of Geographical Teaching out of Nature Study*. London, 1908, 7.

policies pursued by western powers following World War II,⁸⁸ Mackinder presents us with a good starting point.

The following will primarily be concerned with providing the reader with an analysis of major geopolitical theories as they pertain to international relations (IR) and foreign policy formulation. In providing an overview of key literature, we will begin making the argument for a foreign policy rooted in geopolitical thought.

Literature Review

Theories of Modern Geopolitics

Mackinder's most noted work, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, is considered a classic on the intersection of geography, history, and world power and was his attempt "to bridge the growing gap between the sciences and the humane arts."⁸⁹ Containing many noteworthy observations, his insistence that world politics had fundamentally changed with the dawn of the "closed system"⁹⁰ is perhaps most important. He argued that there are no more worldly frontiers; "there is no longer elasticity of political expansion in lands beyond the pale."⁹¹ He surmised that conflict between nations would be more common and that, "Every shock, every disaster or superfluity" will now be felt across the globe.⁹² Writing in 1942, Mackinder's thinking contained impressive foresight, as his analysis has proved true in our age of globalization. The years following the close of World War II – arguably the last truly decisive war – were not followed by years of peace. Instead, the numerous proxy wars that came to symbolize the Cold War materialized and metastasized into a century of near-constant conflict. This reflects well

⁸⁸ Gray, Colin S. *The Geopolitics of Super Power*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998, 4.

⁸⁹ Mackinder, Halford John, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, xiii.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 29.

⁹¹ Ibid, 29.

⁹² Ibid, 29.

on our hypothesis; as this indicates that the central tenets of geopolitical thought are unavoidable and must be given a place in foreign policy formulation.

Mackinder also addressed the role of technology, suggesting that certain technologies could provide the state with strategic opportunities,⁹³ but warned that technology could not override realities such as geography, history, and culture. This is probably Mackinder's greatest contribution, as it tells us how geopolitics fits in with prominent international relations theories. If one acknowledges that the aforementioned realities are necessary to the formulation of international policy, then one would subscribe to the schools such as realism and possibly neo-conservatism, eschewing liberalism and constructivism.

Likewise, an analysis of the 20th century reflects well on this observation posited by Mackinder; as the last century was certainly a period of constant conflict – most of which was ideologically driven – and war evolved from a wholly-national production to a technologically-driven ordeal; a transformation that has not exactly produced definitive results. This suggests that technology cannot overcome certain particularly imposing realities.

Nicholas J. Spykman, the first to refine Mackinder's theories, thought deeply about what America's role should be after World War II. *The Geography of Peace*, published in 1944, was prophetic in that he accurately predicted how war-torn Europe and Asia would align themselves in the bipolar world that became the defining characteristic of the 20th century.

Like Mackinder, Spykman realized the importance of geography; however, he insisted that control of the world's rimlands – not the heartland prescribed by Mackinder

⁹³ Ibid, 111.

– was the seat of geopolitical power.⁹⁴ Whereas Mackinder saw power permeate outward from within the great landmass of the heartland (Russia), Spykman saw “encirclement,” the containment and incorporation of territory via the rimlands (the Asiatic and European littorals) as the top strategic move that could be made by an expansionary power.⁹⁵

Spykman asserted that the U.S. was vulnerable due to technological advances in sea and air power, as these technologies assisted aggressive powers bridge the defensive barriers of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.⁹⁶ This differed from Mackinder, who wrote that technology could not completely negate advantages associated with geography. This inferred vulnerability led Spykman to advocate for an interventionist U.S. foreign policy, stating that “it is the interest of this country to throw its weight into the scales to prevent any such aggressive action from taking place.”⁹⁷ Calling for a national policy of “peace through strength,” Spykman wrote:

*If, then, the security of a nation depends ultimately on the strength which it can command for its defense, the political strategy whose objective is to guarantee security must maintain the state’s power in peace time.*⁹⁸

Crafted during World War II and exercised during the Cold War, Spykman’s geopolitical ideas contain considerable merit. While the dissolution of the Soviet Union reflects favorably on Spykman, perhaps his theories only had applicability in a bipolar world. Is the world today too complex – is power too diffuse to construct a foreign policy agenda modeled on such a seemingly simple principle?

⁹⁴ Spykman, Nicholas J, and Helen R. Nicholl. *The Geography of Peace*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944, x.

⁹⁵ Ibid, x-xi.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 54-55.

⁹⁷ Ibid, xi.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 5.

Contemporary Geopolitics

Colin S. Gray is best categorized as a contemporary of Spykman, as he insisted on the primacy of physical security⁹⁹ and the importance of hard power in world politics. He reinserted history into the geopolitical equation, warning that it had been frequently overlooked¹⁰⁰ (it had been taken out in the crafting of various postwar theories, namely institutionalism). Gray argued that hard power is non-negotiable, and that it is the only reliable political tool. We see the rise of regional powers in Eurasia and their military buildup – congruent with the stagnation of U.S. military technology, declining competitive advantages brought on by the proliferation of dual-use technology and sequestration, and personnel cuts across the services – as all making the case for Gray – and therefore for a more prominent role for geopolitics in national strategy.

Journalist Robert D. Kaplan maintained that geography remains crucial to geopolitics; even in an age where technology is viewed as an equalizer, as “the exercise of continuous influence or control requires the physical presence of armed people in the area at issue.”¹⁰¹ Simply put, technology is not a panacea for boots on the ground. The seemingly unceasing insurgencies plaguing the Middle East suggests that geography still wins out over technology and that geopolitical considerations – such as geography – have not been given enough credence by strategists.

To engineer his theory, Kaplan borrowed from Paul Bracken, who observed that while the west is focused on globalization, Eurasia is absorbed with nationalism and

⁹⁹ Gray, Colin S. *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era: Heartland, Rimlands, and the Technological Revolution*. New York: Crane, Russak, 1977, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 35.

¹⁰¹ Kaplan, Robert D., *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*. New York: Random House, 2012, 33-34.

growing military power,¹⁰² which may lead to “the shrinking of the Eurasian chessboard”¹⁰³ With this in mind, one can only wonder if Asia will follow Europe; turning outward aggressively after decades of internal focus. Again, world events speaks well this idea, as regional powers such as China, India and Japan continue to grow with the ultimate goal of expelling U.S. influence from the region.

These regional powers’ desire to expel American influence is perhaps best explained by their rich histories – each of the aforementioned boast longstanding cultures who established empires and enjoyed unparalleled dominance. America’s heavy footprint in the Asia-Pacific is at odds with millennia of history – a reality that no doubt rubs these countries the wrong way. A foreign policy with such geopolitical considerations at its core would arguably anticipate such sentiment; meaning that a national policy could be crafted to effectively deal with it.

Henry Kissinger, a practitioner of realism, argues for a U.S. foreign policy rooted in geopolitical thought on the same grounds that we do. In his latest work, *World Order*, he sets out to illustrate how historical events have dictated the rise and collapse of nations. In cataloguing events of historical significance, Kissinger makes it clear that history dictates a country’s internal political makeup as well as their political posture abroad.

To showcase this, Kissinger examines the history of Russia. He surmises that Russia’s aggressive foreign policy is a result of her uneven past; one largely of constant national threat. He writes that Viking raids from the north, Arab incursions from the south and Mongol invasions from the east (all of which occurred in her early history), has

¹⁰² Ibid, 115.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 117.

left Russia to reside in a state of permanent anxiety, constantly fearing invasion.¹⁰⁴ Kissinger supposes that Russia is cursed by her tremendous size, an asset when considering the natural resources at her disposal, but a liability when considering the security implications. Considering these things, Kissinger writes that Russia's inability to dominating its territory and seize all available power (an impossibility) has led to an advantageous and aggressive national identity, making Russia a unique threat.

In making such a conclusion, Kissinger is suggesting that an appreciation of history is a necessity in predicting action on the world stage. We would agree with this, and argue that theories of schools of IR that fail to realize this are likely to be untrue and produce ineffective policy. If you choose to neglect history and observe what has come before you, how can one expect to have any insight into what is yet to come? The answer here that you cannot; to neglect the past is to retreat from the responsibilities of the future.

In *The Grand Chessboard*, Zbigniew Brzezinski attempted to map the geopolitical landscape of Eurasia (his chessboard) following the collapse of the Soviet Union. He wrote that a rejection of American overtures in Eurasia would translate to an end of American primacy and the end of U.S. influence in Eurasia.¹⁰⁵ The activity of Asian countries over the past decade, including the cultivation of nationalism and increased military spending seem to indicate that they are moving to oust U.S. influence sooner than later.

¹⁰⁴ Kissinger, Henry. *World Order*. New York: Penguin Press, 2014, 51.

¹⁰⁵ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: BasicBooks, 1997, 35.

Brzezinski's inclusion of Ukraine as a major geopolitical "pivot" (a state occupying a sensitive location or acting as a defensive buffer¹⁰⁶) also lends credibility to his work. He wrote that Russian possession of Ukraine guaranteed her a role in European politics, and provided her with the opportunity to pursue an empire (he cited Ukraine's significant population, resource wealth and Black Sea access as desirable enablers).¹⁰⁷ Brzezinski's observations explain well the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula as well as the reboot in Russian revanchism generally. The analysis being made here by Brzezinski is similar to that of Kaplan; and therefore, the argument we suggest is similar too. Asian countries are seeking to reclaim their place as historical world powers – a phenomenon best explained by the historical component of geopolitics.

Angelo M. Codevilla, a professor of international relations, argued for a common-sense based approach to geopolitics that is anchored in *truly* American interests. He wrote that America should not respond to every world crisis, as this would result in attempting to manage the globe; a prospect that no power – even the U.S. – is capable of.¹⁰⁸ He wrote that "confusing your country's interests with anybody else's...guarantees you will end up harming all you touch."¹⁰⁹ This is profound in that it succinctly describes the single biggest flaw in U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War.

A determination of what true "wants and needs" are is crucial to survival and security in a multipolar world. This, Codevilla wrote, will require "transcending Liberal Interventionism, Neoconservatism, and Realism – all variations of an ideology that

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 41.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 46.

¹⁰⁸ Codevilla, Angelo, *Advice to War Presidents: A Remedial Course In Statecraft*. New York: Basic Books, 2009, 109.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 109.

assumes America's objectives and powers are essentially limitless."¹¹⁰ Along with transcendence, he advocated for a return to the basics, which included strength of arms; reasoning that well-equipped troops will reassure friends while keeping foes at bay.¹¹¹ He wrote that "Whether others like us or not is their business. Whether they respect us or not is ours,"¹¹² a reminder that in an anarchic world – where powers of differing backgrounds maintain different values – hard power is always respected; whereas weakness is provocative.

By writing that we must transcend various schools of IR, Codevilla is arguing for a foreign policy solely based on present realities – or, geopolitical considerations. In essence, he argues what we set to make clear in our introduction; that American resources, while vast, are not infinite. Therefore, a tailored policy must be implemented by calculating the realities of the present in an effort to achieve maximum results. A foreign policy untethered to reality is sure to fail and squander precious resources.

Counterviews to Geopolitics

Those who suggest that realities such as history and geography can be overcome are categorized as the critics of classical geopolitical thought. One critic, John Agnew, argued that American hegemony has been made possible by globalization, writing that international institutions have normalized and spread American-style marketplace society, which has led to the adoption of American norms and standards.¹¹³ He wrote that globalization is a "hegemonic project" of the US that represents "a dramatic

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 264.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 271.

¹¹² Ibid, 271.

¹¹³ Agnew, John A. *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005, 1-2.

quicken and geographical reformulation....”¹¹⁴ It is undeniable that globalization has forever changed the world, but to suggest that it has reformulated the geographical landscape is somewhat farfetched. If so many of the international institutions embodying American values have transformed the landscape, why then does America often refuse to participate in them? Because we realize that we can only count on *our* material resources and capabilities; we possess a healthy skepticism that international institutions can regulate world politics in a meaningful way.¹¹⁵

Beyond these incentives, Agnew wonders if the economic and political cost of modern warfare between evenly matched foes now outweighs “any conceivable collective benefit national populations can derive from it.”¹¹⁶ We would argue that this flies counter to common sense, as such a calculation seemingly discounts history as well as social and political pressures, all of which have continually led to war.

Like Agnew, Melvin Goodman wrote that the desire to participate in globalization can prompt nations to transcend their “past mistakes” in an effort to work towards creating cooperative relationships.¹¹⁷ Goodman also believed that that U.S. foreign policy could use various political and economic institutions – tools of soft power – to foster liberal norms and standards.¹¹⁸

While one can argue that these tools have yielded some success, there have also been instances throughout history that indicate clearly that there are cultures and ideologies that cannot be wooed by elements of soft power; respecting only the tangible.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 2.

¹¹⁵ Drezner, Daniel W. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011, 34.

¹¹⁶ Agnew, John A. *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power*, 67.

¹¹⁷ Wiarda, Howard J., *U.S. Foreign and Strategic Policy In the Post-Cold War Era: A Geopolitical Perspective*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996, 81.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 82.

Goodman's suggestion that countries will more or less forsake their individual identities in order to adopt an internationalist identity is questionable as there is little in the historical record to suggest that this is a likely outcome. It also defies human nature, as people tend to feel proud of their nation's roots, particularly if it is an ancient culture.¹¹⁹ With many of our geopolitical foes being ancient nations, it is unlikely that they will adopt an internationalist persona.

The problem with Goodman's view is further compounded by the fact that national identity is multi-dimensional, and consists of attributes including: historic homeland/territory, common myths and historical memories, and a publicly shared culture¹²⁰ – all of which are best explained by geopolitics; the study of understanding state-to-state interaction through the synthesis of geography, history, politics, and culture.¹²¹

Gerry Kearns critiques the conservative geopolitics of Mackinder, writing that it is "our turn...to challenge the inevitability of globalization and the emergence of a global state..."¹²² Advocating for what he coins as progressive geopolitics, he posits that American unipolarity has passed and that a new strategic policy must be crafted to accommodate the rising powers constituting the multipolar world. He harshly critiques conservative geopolitics, writing that it "Comprehends...elements of the geopolitical

¹¹⁹ Guibernau, Montserrat. "Anthony D. Smith on nations and national identity: a critical assessment." *Nations & Nationalism* 10, no. 1/2 (January 2004): 125-141. *International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center*, EBSCOhost, 137 (December 15, 2014).

¹²⁰ Ibid, 133.

¹²¹ Katsura, A.V. "Geopolitics:" *Value Inquiry*, Book Series 276, (August 2014), 220.

¹²² Kearns, Gerard. *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 295.

imaginary, including a view of the world as containing incompatible civilizations, hostile states, intense spatial integration, political anarchy, and relentless conflict.”¹²³

Kearns asserts that the most effective way of operating on the global stage is to involve multilateral institutions,¹²⁴ which are viable tools because of their ability to channel elements of soft power in an effort to collect information, formulate international campaigns and lobby on behalf of the many.¹²⁵ He wrote that the world is well positioned to leverage the benefits that non-governmental institutions (NGOs) can provide, as there are roughly 30,000 today (compared to nearly 1,000 in 1950).¹²⁶

Kearns borrowed from Robert Jackson, who argued that if people across the globe are to interact, then the world community must settle upon a set of mutually agreeable terms that transcend cultures and civilizations.¹²⁷ Jackson suggested that this is feasible because the “respect for the sovereignty of individual states” has evolved and ultimately taken form in multilateral agencies such as the United Nations (UN).¹²⁸ The problem with this view is obvious, as state sovereignty is not respected throughout the world – one need only point to border disputes and annexed territory to refute this claim.

Received Knowledge

Old School Lessons for the Future

The fact that both Mackinder and Spykman are still regularly cited by leading foreign policy professionals and practitioners indicates that their ideas are still applicable today; but whose ideas are the *most* relevant? Mackinder’s prescient 1942 claim that the

¹²³ Ibid, 230 (emphasis added).

¹²⁴ Ibid, 267.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 270.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 270.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 272.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 272.

world was finally a “closed system” is still paramount because it mandates that policies enacted by the state be constantly reconsidered, as the consequences of those policies will ripple across the globe in an unpredictable fashion. Spykman’s theory of encirclement *was* relevant to the 20th century, but the globe is no longer divided between east and west, and the cost of encircling foes is simply too expensive and is becoming increasingly untenable in an age of austerity where limited state resources are being devoted to domestic programs – a policy choice to be sure, but a reality that policymakers must come to terms with nonetheless. A strategy requiring the forward-staging of military forces (including all service support required to keep them combat-ready), tremendous political capital and wide constituent support, encirclement in the historical sense is not likely to be pursued unless overwhelming public support can be secured; as containment of top geopolitical foes would require an overabundance of public support and national resources – neither of which are likely to be readily given for the reasons outlined above.

The realities of the past have not diminished in the present and they are unlikely to do so in the future, as the world’s geography will remain static and nations will continue to rely heavily upon natural resources for growth and sustainment; both of which will likely lead to continuing involvement in the affairs of the resource-rich “pivots” (countries making up Central Asia that are endowed with tremendous resource wealth) by the world’s major players.¹²⁹

Ideas forwarded by contemporaries of Mackinder who acknowledge that certain realities remain indispensable geopolitical considerations – including Gray and Kaplan among others – are therefore best suited to explain events taking place in the world today.

¹²⁹ Kearns, Gerard. *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*, 10.

As detailed above, progressive geopolitics and similar views critical of conservative geopolitics fail to fully address the realities that dictate human interaction.

Theory & Hypothesis

Fundamental Principles & Respect for the Uncompromising

History has shown that democracies often demonstrate a proclivity to gravitate towards policies and institutions linked to progressive geopolitics; many of the fundamental qualities of democratic government and classical liberalism – individual liberty, capitalism and economic opportunity – are also core components of international institutions designed to promote human rights and expand global cooperation. Conversely, it has been observed that democracies too easily forgo defense preparedness in order to seek the coveted “peace dividend.” This is perhaps true today, where there are no obvious foes. Instead, our foes exist in the shadows, hidden from view. Harold W. Rood wrote “Those who warn of war and the need to prepare for it are not welcome prophets in a democratic society. They will be dismissed today...as minions of a “military-industrial complex” and considered beyond the pale of decent folk...”¹³⁰

We would posit that the United States is at risk of becoming another yet another democracy to stumble pursuing such a dividend, having been too reliant on the tools of progressive geopolitics – a process which has resulted in generally ineffective policy. Repeatedly ineffective policy has led to diminished geopolitical standing and a more insecure world. We hypothesize that American geopolitical dominance and global

¹³⁰ Rood, Harold W. *Kingdoms of the Blind: How the Great Democracies Have Resumed the Follies That So Nearly Cost Them Their Life*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1980, 5.

security can be restored and national interests secured by emphasizing fundamental principles of conservative geopolitics.

We cannot overemphasize the uncompromising nature of culture, geography and history in the formulation of geopolitical strategy. The past is rife with examples of great perils that befell humanity because world leaders failed to grasp their importance in strategic decision-making. Therefore, views that fail to consider these elements or discount them too much are not useful.

For example, while globalization has led to the spread of American norms and standards, it has not served as a catalyst for unmitigated global transformation; we are still a world of nations with *national* agendas that often run counter to the agendas of *international* organizations. While organizations such as NATO and the UN are awesome in theory, their large membership renders them largely ineffective, as the goals of member nations are too diverse to be succinctly summarized in a cohesive mission statement.

Methodology

Old Answers to New Problems?

To determine if conservative geopolitics conforms to the strategic framework of the U.S. and is best suited to defend her definitive national interests, we will examine recent documents released by the United States Government (USG) to determine what her core interests are. To do so, we will draw primarily from the National Security Council (NSC). Tasked with creating documents in conjunction with the executive branch, the NSC publishes documents highlighting major national security concerns; which of course necessitates a clear understanding and articulation of core interests –

without doing so, major national security concerns cannot be adequately identified or prioritized.

We will then examine a number of significant international developments affecting those interests with the aim of discerning if conservative geopolitics can explain them, and if policies rooted in conservative geopolitics can favorably address them. By following this course, we can determine if conservative geopolitics should be the basis of U.S. foreign policy. We will subsequently be positioned to make recommendations leveraging the political tools at our disposal, while clearly articulating both our intent and our strategy. By doing so, we can send a clear message to our would-be adversaries and hopefully broadcast a message of resolve and strength – arguably lacking components of current U.S. foreign policy strategy.

As a product of the NSC and the executive more broadly, U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) is the best place to look when attempting to identify U.S. national interests – as both are involved in the prioritization of security concerns; a process requiring an understanding of what constitutes a national interest. As one may expect, interests are identified at the outset, and include: 1) security of the United States, its citizens, allies and partners, 2) a strong and growing economy, devoted to the promotion of opportunity and prosperity, 3) respect for universal values, and 4) an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security and opportunity.¹³¹ Congruently, top national security priorities are also listed, and include: 1) nonproliferation and nuclear security, 2) defeat of al-Qaida and affiliated terrorist

¹³¹ White House. *National Security Strategy*. 2010, 7.

organizations, 3) Iraqi sovereignty and Middle East peace, and 4) renewed economic security, stability and growth.¹³²

The White House has acknowledged that there are limits to what American power can and cannot do, and that it is not possible for the U.S. to intervene in every world crisis.¹³³ This is an important acknowledgment, as failure to realize this would result in repeated poor foreign policy decision-making. Additionally, the NSS acknowledges that there are positives and negatives associated with both unilateral action and collective action. In the executive summary, President Barack Obama wrote: “We are clear-eyed about the challenge of mobilizing collective action, and the shortfalls of our international system,”¹³⁴ a statement that would suggest that that a balanced geopolitical approach would be sought by his administration. A read of the NSS confirms that a balanced, comprehensive approach is what the administration seeks, but has this actually been realized?

Recent flare-ups across the world would suggest otherwise. Former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel’s remark that “the world is exploding all over,”¹³⁵ may have been a bit of an exaggeration, but it does encompass the sense of tremendous insecurity and uncertainty that is gripping the globe today. To be sure, every administration faces international dilemmas, and it is therefore not our intent to charge the current administration with responsibility for every crisis. However, we find that the resurgence of Russian revanchism and invasion of Ukraine, an increasingly aggressive Beijing, and

¹³² Ibid, 4-5.

¹³³ Ibid, ii.

¹³⁴ Ibid, ii.

¹³⁵ “Defense Secretary: ‘The World is Exploding All Over,’” The Weekly Standard, last updated August 13, 2014. http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/defense-secretary-world-exploding-all-over_802893.html (December 3, 2014).

the resurgence of Islamic terrorism in Iraq and Syria are the direct result of an *imbalanced* grand strategy that fails to fully recognize the weight of certain realities; namely, history and culture.

What follows is our effort to test if conservative geopolitics can explain these international events of significance and if policies rooted in conservative geopolitics can address them in a way that upholds and protects enduring US national interests.

Data

1) Revanchist Reboot

The influences on Russian President Vladimir Putin are no secret, nor are his personal experiences; both of which arguably dictate the course he has plotted for Russia in the century ahead. Born in 1952,¹³⁶ he came of age during the golden era of the Soviet Union; an era that he has sought to restore as President. President Putin has not attempted to shield his foreign policy worldview – he is an unabashed realist. One may also label Putin a nationalist; an accusation that wouldn't be without merit, as he certainly riles up his constituents with unrelenting rhetoric indicative of a nationalist. However, this would be an oversimplification, as Putin has not moved hastily to restore the territory associated with the USSR; instead, he has moved with a tempered aggression. These calculated moves would suggest that Putin is more than simply a Russian nationalist and more of a revisionist who is keenly aware of key geopolitical considerations.

As such, he is drawn to conservative geopolitics, and has given us evidence of this, recently stating: “After the dissolution of bipolarity on the planet, we no longer have

¹³⁶ “Vladimir Putin: The rebuilding of ‘Soviet Russia,’” BBC News, last updated March 27, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26769481> (December 4, 2014).

stability. Key international institutions are not getting any stronger; on the contrary, in many cases, they are sadly degrading.”¹³⁷

Too often however, strategists and analysts befuddle the public with intense over analysis, delving into the minutiae while subsequently losing sight of the big picture. Could the key to understanding Putin’s decision-making – and Russia’s recent expedition into Crimea – simply be explained by examining Russian culture, history and geography?

Before answering this question, it is imperative that we understand why the Russian invasion of Ukraine is of interest to the U.S. While one can identify a number of important reasons to support the Ukrainians, it is the simple fact that they are a sovereign nation whose people have a right to self-determination – arguably the value that underwrites all other American values that mandates our support. Failure to take a strong stand and act with unwavering conviction would only further diminish America’s image as the world’s indispensable force for freedom.

Culture

From the perspective of culture, conservative geopolitics seems to explain Russian action in Crimea quite well. Vladimir Putin has repeatedly claimed a shared culture when defending his decision to annex the peninsula, citing the 1.5 million Russians living in Crimea (out of a total population of 2.2 million),¹³⁸ and continues to declare that he will defend Russians everywhere; a statement that when taken in historical context suggests that Putin may continue to annex territory inhabited by sizeable ethnically Russian populations.

¹³⁷ “Transcript: Putin says Russia will protect the rights of Russians abroad,” The Washington Post, last updated March 18, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-putin-says-russia-will-protect-the-rights-of-russians-abroad/2014/03/18/432a1e60-ae99-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html (December 4, 2014).

¹³⁸ “Vladimir Putin: The rebuilding of ‘Soviet Russia.’”

While the annexation of Crimea is certain to alienate Europe in the short-term, the continent's reliance on Russian oil and natural gas will ensure that relations stay relatively static – at least for the next few years. While in the process of building more liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, Europe still lacks the capacity to import from North America and Asia.¹³⁹ This is a conclusion likely reached by Putin, who sees a window of opportunity where he can bully Europe while still maintaining close relations. Beyond the next five years however, Putin will likely attempt to claim Crimea's European culture for all of Russia, with the intent of aligning Russia with Europe as opposed to Asia; a move that would keep Russia from battling with China for Eurasian supremacy. Having made vast economic and trade investments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, China is well ahead of Russia.¹⁴⁰

History

From the perspective of history, it is perhaps most apparent why Moscow covets Crimea. With his words, Putin has demonstrated his deep belief that Crimea has always been a part of Russia, "It was only when Crimea ended up as part of a different country that Russia realized that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered."¹⁴¹ Clearly Putin maintains that Crimea is a fundamental part of the Russian state.

A similar justification was used by Hitler when he demanded Czechoslovakia and later invaded France to take the oft contested Alsace-Lorraine. Putin likely thinks that he too can accrue territory by taking a similar approach. So far, a policy of appeasement has

¹³⁹ "Europe LNG terminal capacity seen ample if Russian gas flows stop," Reuters, last updated September 30, 2014. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/09/30/europe-gas-lng-idUKL6N0RV2I220140930> (December 5, 2014).

¹⁴⁰ "Putin Is Losing Out to China in Central Asia's Latest 'Great Game,'" Bloomberg Businessweek, last updated November 06, 2014. <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-11-06/putin-loses-his-grip-on-central-asia-as-china-moves-in> (December 5, 2014).

¹⁴¹ "Transcript: Putin says Russia will protect the rights of Russians abroad."

been implemented by Europe, whose posture is eerily similar to its pre-World War I form. The parallels are striking – following World War I, Europe was not willing to go to war with Hitler – today, Europe is not willing to go provoke a war with Putin and is tired of continuous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Like the failure of the European allies to rearm following World War I – which led to the Nazis conquering the entire continent before forces could be raised – NATO can only boast 4 members out of 28 that are currently meeting the 2% gross domestic product (GDP) on defense.¹⁴² With a military budget that has doubled over the past decade, and is reaching \$90 billion, Europe may in fact be encouraging – or provoking – hostility.

This observation has not been made by us alone, as it has been echoed by some of the top international relations thinkers, including Kissinger, who wrote, “Europe – who invented the balance of power concept, has limited its geopolitical power by self-imposing military limits on itself,” and “Europe has little scope to respond when universal norms are flouted.”¹⁴³

Geography

From a geographic perspective, the acquisition of Crimea is very appealing to Moscow. Almost entirely surrounded by water, Crimea dominates the Black Sea and its possession would provide a Russian Navy in the midst of historic overhaul and modernization with access to the Mediterranean Sea via the Bosphorus Strait. Access to the Mediterranean Sea would provide the Russian Navy with the ability to project

¹⁴² “NATO Summit 2014: Time for the Alliance to get Back to Basics,” The Heritage Foundation, last updated August 19, 2014. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/08/nato-summit-2014-time-for-the-alliance-to-get-back-to-basics> (December 5, 2014).

¹⁴³ Kissinger, Henry. *World Order*, 7.

significant power over both Europe and North Africa, and would enable her to claim blue-water navy status.

Perhaps of even greater importance however, would be Moscow's ability to further dominate the European and Eurasian energy markets. One of the largest oil and gas producers in the world, Russia accounts for 12% of the world's oil and 20% of world's natural gas.¹⁴⁴ As a large producer, oil and natural gas account for an overwhelming majority of Russia's exports (~70%) and about half of the country's budget revenue.¹⁴⁵ When one considers how one-sided Russia's economy is – and how dependent it is on Europe's energy consumption – we can begin to see that from Putin's perspective, the acquisition of Crimea ensures that Russia maintains its grip on Europe. For Putin's military modernization to continue, it necessary for him to leverage the resources at his disposal.

2) Recension of the Middle Kingdom

Like Moscow, Beijing has also demonstrated a measurably more aggressive foreign policy in recent years; particularly in regard to its territorial claims in the South China Sea. While maritime disputes are not new to China, the overt interest displayed by Beijing in the midst of China's historic naval buildup is a clear break from their traditionally more calculating and discrete nature. The increased defense spending (second to only the US¹⁴⁶) and military modernization that is taking place in China should not be underestimated, nor should it be written off as a result of the fit of nationalism that

¹⁴⁴ "The political economy of Russian oil and gas," American Enterprise Institute, last updated May 29, 2013. <http://www.aei.org/publication/the-political-economy-of-russian-oil-and-gas/> (December 4, 2014).

¹⁴⁵ "Russia Faces Economy Trap as Oil Decline Looms, EBRD Says," Bloomberg, last updated December 14, 2012. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-13/russia-at-risk-from-dwindling-oil-reserves-european-bank-says.html> (December 4, 2014).

¹⁴⁶ "Historians say China twisting its history to justify military buildup, aggression," Stars and Stripes, last updated, December 14, 2014. <http://www.stripes.com/news/historians-say-china-twisting-its-history-to-justify-military-buildup-aggression-1.319347> (December 18, 2014).

is currently gripping Chinese society. These would be gross generalizations; and the latter would ignore China's cautious, pragmatic past.

We would suggest that China's recent aggressive nature is indicative of the Chinese leadership's conclusion that there now exists a moment of opportunity by which they can reap reward with little involved risk. We posit that Beijing views current American foreign policy as unbalanced and as largely reactive; lacking the strategic vision that is often featured in sound policy. Perceiving this, China believes it can capitalize on dwindling US influence in the Asian-Pacific and enhance its own sphere of influence. This would suggest that Chinese president Xi Jinping possess both an appreciation and an understanding of the various geopolitical considerations in play.

Like his Russian counterpart, Jinping has made clear his intent to defend his country's geopolitical interests, stating: "We are strongly committed to safeguarding the country's sovereignty and security, and defending our territorial integrity."¹⁴⁷

China's quest for territory in the South China Sea infringes upon the sovereignty of other nations and, as a nation dedicated to individual freedom and self-determination, it is in America's interest to see national sovereignty upheld. Lastly, no other nation in the Asian-Pacific can come close to matching China militarily. The US is the guarantor of freedom for many in the region and it is in the American interest maintain a presence in the region to deter further aggression.

History

History explains recent actions taken by the Chinese in the region quite well. Experts in Chinese history have determined that there is a direct correlation between

¹⁴⁷ "China's Maritime Disputes," Council on Foreign Relations. http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/chinas-maritime-disputes/p31345#/?cid=otr-marketing_use-china_sea_InfoGuide#overview (December 17, 2014).

China's foreign policy and its national strength. When power has been abundant, China has been aggressive; when China has experienced a decline, the nation has become defensive and internally-focused.¹⁴⁸ Yuan-kang Wang, professor at Western Michigan University, stated that Chinese aggressiveness is determined by "a realistic assessment about the balance of power," and that when strong, China prefers to leverage military power against regional adversaries.¹⁴⁹

In the tradition on Zheng He, the legendary Chinese admiral who traversed much of the known world in the late 14th and early 15th centuries to trade and enlarge China's influence,¹⁵⁰ China is again growing its naval capabilities in order to accrue a preponderance of influence and resource wealth. Realizing that no other Asian power can match them – and perhaps perceiving that the US lacks the political capital to raise support and lacks the desire to intervene – the time is right to leverage the political tools available and further their interests. From a position of unmatched regional dominance, Beijing can flex its muscles and bully much smaller regional neighbors into submission.

China is an ancient civilization that boasts a history of empire and like Russia, it is revanchist by nature. When realizing the balance of power is in its favor, it is only natural that China would seek to leverage its resources to capitalize on the temporary window of opportunity.

Geography

As a regional power seeking global power status, China realizes that it must continue to fuel its economy, strengthen its borders/claims, and continue to grow its

¹⁴⁸ "Historians say China twisting its history to justify military buildup, aggression."

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ "China's Great Armada," National Geographic, July 2005.

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0507/feature2/> (December 18, 2014)

sphere of influence. All of these can be accomplished with the acquisition of disputed territory, particularly with the acquisition of Taiwan, the Spratly Islands, and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.¹⁵¹

While the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands don't possess much strategic value (total land area is 7 sq. km.¹⁵²), the surrounding waters possess rich oil and natural gas deposits. These deposits are essential for continued expansion and would be far easier to extract than proven reserves located deep within China; as a majority of these reserve basins are located in the remote western provinces – a problem since most of the country's natural gas infrastructure is located along the eastern coast.¹⁵³

Acquisition of the Spratly Islands would also provide China with access to abundant natural resources; however, the key draw of these islands would be their power projection potential. Though much smaller than the Diaoyu/Senkakus, the Spratlys are located several hundred miles from the mainland and are in proximity to Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. Occupying the waterway between these nations, the militarization of the islands could provide China with a strategic forward location, which would allow the Chinese to project significant power over neighbors with competing maritime claims. Military analysts have made this point, writing that placement of Chinese military assets (which are unmatched regionally) on contested islands would

¹⁵¹ "China's Maritime Disputes."

¹⁵² "How uninhabited islands soured China-Japan ties," BBC, last updated November 09, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11341139> (December 18, 2014).

¹⁵³ Higashi, Nobuyuki. "Natural Gas in China: Market Evolution and Strategy," International Energy Agency, June 2009, 7 & 9.

allow Beijing to coerce “other claimants into relinquishing their claims and possessions.”¹⁵⁴

Of course, of all the territorial disputes maintained by China, the incorporation of Taiwan is still the most pressing yet also the most unlikely – for now. Numerous strategists have been emphatic about the geostrategic importance of Taiwan, going so far as to say, “A China without Taiwan will not be able to break out of the ‘first island chain’ and will be denied entry into the Pacific, so much so that its southeastern territory will be devoid of any security.”¹⁵⁵

Fortunately, the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) still lacks the capabilities required to take the island, and the Taiwan Relations Act still ensures American maritime security support for Taiwan.¹⁵⁶

Discussion

After analyzing two international developments with national security implications for the U.S. – the Russian invasion of Crimea and aggressive maneuvering by the Chinese in the South China Sea – we have found that geopolitical theory explains both intent and action quite well. By examining the basic components of geopolitical power with the context of the operating environment – the chief components being geography and history – one can make sense of actions that, without an appreciation or understanding of geopolitical thought seem extraordinary, random or even unexplainable.

¹⁵⁴ “China to continue building on disputed islands, retired PLA general says,” Stars and Stripes, last updated November 25, 2014. <http://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/china-to-continue-building-on-disputed-islands-retired-pla-general-says-1.316044> (December 18, 2014).

¹⁵⁵ Yoshihara, Toshi., and James R. Holmes. *Red Star Over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2010, 53.

¹⁵⁶ Cheng, Dean. “Taiwan’s Maritime Security: A Critical American Interest,” Background: The Heritage Foundation, No. 2889 (2014), 1 & 6.

While the case studies presented were both involving large, land-centric nations, they were chosen because they represent the most definitive geopolitical threats to the US. To be sure, other nations (and even sub-state organizations with transnational aspirations, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)) present geopolitical threats to America as well; but no one comes close to matching the power wielded by China and Russia.

We find that the case studies selected have demonstrated the importance of highlighting geopolitical considerations when crafting foreign policy. An understanding of the underlying issues that drive international events can allow a nation to craft specific, yet strategically driven policies that pairs “means” to “ends” in a way that ensures that limited resources are applied effectively. Ultimately, the implementation of a geopolitical foreign policy – namely a *conservative* geopolitical foreign policy – can provide the state with greater clarity because it possesses tremendous explanatory power.

Conclusion

In closing, I believe that the research encompassed in this paper presents a strong case for the absolute primacy geopolitical considerations should play in the formulation of foreign policy. Conservative geopolitics has proven to be extremely relevant and useful in our post-modern age where international, liberal institutions are increasingly favored and touted as the preeminent mediums for resolving disputes between states. While institutions associated with progressive geopolitics are certainly of use, to give them credence over traditional or conservative geopolitical tools would be shortsighted and potentially ruinous.

National leaders have showcased a propensity to lose sight of the utility geopolitical analysis can provide, and too often, instead of operating at the broad, grand strategy/national policy level, choose to delve into the minutiae. Working among the lower levels (the operational and tactical levels) of policy is fine and encouraged— so long as they do not infringe upon the prerogatives of those tasked with specifically overseeing the administration of policy at the lower levels – but it is imperative to first demonstrate a strong understanding of the broader framework. A failure to understand the framework will result in unintended actions beyond the scope of the original policy, yielding unintended consequences.

It has been a mistake of previous administrations to discount the importance of geopolitical considerations and dismiss them as simply Cold War era considerations useful only for a world featuring multiple superpowers. Historian Walter Russell Mead recently wrote:

*Chinese, Iranian, and Russian revanchism haven't overturned the post-Cold War settlement in Eurasia yet, and may never do so, but they have converted an uncontested status quo into a contested one. U.S. presidents no longer have a free hand as they seek to deepen the liberal system; they are increasingly concerned with shoring up its geopolitical foundations.*¹⁵⁷

Mead's synopsis makes it clear that in a world where your nation may have nothing but good intentions, it is still necessary to keep in mind the intentions and actions of other players as they *exist* – not simply as you *wish*.

¹⁵⁷ Mead, Walter Russell. "The Return of Geopolitics: The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers," Foreign Affairs, May/June 2014. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141211/walter-russell-mead/the-return-of-geopolitics> (December 18, 2014).

Foreign policy formulation must account for the world and its players as they *are*, not as one *proposes*.

The Formulation of Foreign Policy:

An Assessment of CBRN Terror

Matthew Rolfes

Research & Thesis III

Introduction

In an interconnected age dominated by complex threats such as transnational terror, asymmetric warfare and cybercrime, it is easy for both those involved in international relations and the general public to underestimate and underappreciate the threat posed by unconventional arms; particularly, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. While there has been resurgent interest in chemical weapons following Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical munitions against anti-government protesters and rebels in August 2013 and the reported use of chlorine gas in roadside bombs by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) against U.S.-backed forces in January 2015,¹⁵⁸ these taboo weapons of twentieth-century notoriety – all of which were the subject of much concern during the Cold War – have arguably slipped into the category of general disinterest in a young century dominated by counterinsurgency and terrorism. This however, is becoming particularly troublesome; especially as increasingly ruthless terrorist organizations and armies – such as Hamas, Hezbollah and ISIS in particular – acquire the resources, technological ability and state backing needed to develop, produce/procure and deploy CBRN weapons.

A far cry from conventional weapons, CBRN weapons are true tools of terror. From the use of industrial-scale chemical warfare executed with devastating effect at the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915¹⁵⁹ to the detonation of an atomic bomb over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, these weapons have demonstrated they are capable of incapacitating, maiming or killing masses of people, and are indiscriminate devices of death, incapable

¹⁵⁸ Riyadh Mohammed, "ISIS Turns to Chemical Weapons As It Loses Ground in Iraq," *The Financial Times*, February 22, 2015, <http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/02/22/ISIS-Turns-Chemical-Weapons-It-Loses-Ground-Iraq> (March 14, 2015).

¹⁵⁹ Tucker, Jonathan B. *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare From World War I to Al-Qaeda*. New York: random House Books LLC, 2006, 14-15.

of differentiating between combatant and civilian. For this reason, the international community has come together to forbid their use and has established organizations such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to closely monitor stockpile reduction, disarmament and storage. These organizations and similar institutions have been given oversight and accountability powers, and are tasked with carrying out inspections; an absolutely critical endeavor, particularly with the proliferation of dual-use technologies, which can put critical components just short of weaponization in hands of those who previously would never would have access. Due to the extreme hazard these weapons pose, defense of the American homeland from CBRN weapons certainly constitutes a top national interest; an observation strengthened from the geopolitical outlook argued for in chapter two, which called for the prioritization of inherent national interests. To be sure, protecting the American homeland from acts of grand terror would constitute a definitive national interest.

Collectively, people throughout the world have deemed the use of CBRN weapons as taboo – unthinkable, off-limits and unacceptable to civil society. Yet for the very reasons that the international community has discouraged the use of CBRN weapons, non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, find them to be rather appealing and often compatible with their extreme ideologies.

As terrorist organizations continue to sweep through the Middle East and North Africa, destroying the helpless and displacing the inhabitants of countries from Libya to Pakistan, resorting to extreme barbarism to enforce their will – all while working tirelessly towards their stated goal of establishing an intolerant, domineering caliphate –

we, the international community, must remain vigilant. The aforementioned groups all have the avowed goal of eradicating their enemies; for Hamas and Hezbollah that is Israel, for, ISIS (and Boko Haram, who has sworn loyalty to the former¹⁶⁰), it is all who do not subscribe to their brand of jihadist sharia (Islamic) law.¹⁶¹ The United States is certainly a target of ISIS and its allies; a fact that cannot be disputed when one considers that the United States is a traditional ally of Israel, is a staunch supporter of religious freedom, and has combat troops based in the region. Top government officials and policymakers have realized this, particularly in light of the execution of U.S. journalists. Directly referencing the group's sophistication, growing wealth and military power, former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel stated that ISIS "are a threat to everything we have, whether it's in Iraq or anywhere else."¹⁶²

The history of extreme violence these groups possess and their extreme goals suggest they may not hesitate to use unconventional weapons in order to satisfy their objectives. Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, attested to the potentially catastrophic firepower such groups seek when referencing ISIS. He stated that ISIS members are "rapidly developing a method of blowing up a major U.S. city and people just can't believe that's happening."¹⁶³ The growing threat that ISIS and other barbarous terrorist organizations present to definitive regional American national security interests and critical allies, mandates that the highest

¹⁶⁰ "Islamic State 'accepts' Boko Haram's allegiance pledge," *BBC News Middle East*, March 13, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31862992> (March 14, 2015).

¹⁶¹ Laub, Zachary and Jonathan Masters. "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 8, 2014. <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state-iraq-syria/p14811> (August 21, 2014).

¹⁶² Ryan, Missy. "Islamic State threat 'beyond anything we've ever seen': Pentagon." *Reuters*, August 21, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/21/us-usa-islamicstate-idUSKBN0GL24V20140821> (August 22, 2014).

¹⁶³ Matishak, Martin. "Republican: ISIS developing means to 'blow up' a US city." *The Hill*, August 21, 2014. <http://thehill.com/policy/defense/215684-republican-isis-developing-means-to-blow-up-an-american-city> (August 22, 2014).

levels of our government reexamine the threat their possession of CBRN weapons poses. The fact that ISIS has used chemical weapons and has recruited weapons experts who worked in Saddam Hussein's advanced weapons programs¹⁶⁴ suggests they are pursuing the means to craft and use CBRN weapons.

In his address to both houses of Congress on March 3, 2015, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu highlighted the threat that nuclear weapons in the possession of Iran (a state sponsor or terrorist organizations) posed not only to Israel, but the United States, warning: "I'll say it one more time – the greatest danger facing our world is the marriage of militant Islam with nuclear weapons."¹⁶⁵

Keeping the Prime Minister's warning in mind and considering the savage acts perpetrated by the aforementioned terrorist organizations, to include beheadings, mass executions, the burning of innocents, and the targeted killings of ethnic and religious minorities, it is clear American policymakers must thoroughly examine the threat these groups possess.

The growing sophistication of various terrorist organizations, paired with extreme ideologies inherently opposed to American principles and social norms maintained by the international community, along with the proliferation of dual-use technology, suggests that the possibility of a CBRN terrorist attack is only going to grow. The interest terrorists have displayed for destructive weapons necessitates a knowledge of these weapons, an understanding of which types may be appealing (and available) to them, and

¹⁶⁴ Riyadh Mohammed, "ISIS Turns to Chemical Weapons As It Loses Ground in Iraq."

¹⁶⁵ "The complete transcript of Netanyahu's address to Congress," *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2015/03/03/full-text-netanyahus-address-to-congress/> (March 14, 2015).

what components would be required for the implementation of a foreign policy aimed at severely degrading terrorist access to these weapons.

While the threat of interstate conflict never ceases to exist, the threat pales in comparison to the threat violent, well-organized terrorist groups pose to the homeland. The U.S., while no longer the unquestioned sole hegemon, is still the world's most powerful nation and no country can match its military strength. A conventional war is therefore unlikely in the short-term, as no state is capable of roughly matching U.S. military strength.

The threat therefore lies in the growing sophistication of ideologically-driven terrorist organizations, which are accumulating territory, imposing strict law and utilizing violence enforce their law and consolidate their territory in state-like fashion.

In order to accomplish the aforementioned objectives with the aim of providing realistic policy recommendations to those who participate, support, or advise in international relations, as well as educate the general public, this paper will set out to discern what the most critical component of a successful foreign policy is and what CBRN weapons are of special interest to terrorist organizations, focusing on those which are the most accessible and congruent with stated ideology and organizational missions. The examination of CBRN weapons will also include a close analysis of where vulnerable stockpiles and sources are located, which could present soft targets for terrorists. The goals of this paper will be to clearly articulate that CBRN terror is a grave threat to the U.S., that it should be a top foreign policy goal, and to ascertain what type of weapon U.S. national security activities should be most concerned with.

Literature Review

Elements of Successful US Foreign Policy

In order to craft a foreign policy capable of severely degrading access to the technological components required to craft CBRN weapons, it is first necessary to determine what components are required for a successful foreign policy. Previous works have outlined and defined core items that should be considered when crafting American foreign policy: how a policy can be “sold” to the public, and what inescapable realities or hard truths must be accounted for when formulating objectives, including the careful calculation of what American power can and can’t do and how long it can be sustained. Having examined how policy is “sold” and should be formulated, it is now time to examine what is needed for policy to be implemented – *successfully*.

Ultimately, implementation boils down to who is assigned to carry out the task; or at the very least, who bears the brunt of the responsibility. While the three branches of American government, the executive, legislative and judicial, all have a role to play in the execution of foreign policy, the amount of power they wield and the role they play has shifted over time. Up until the mid-twentieth century, the executive and legislative branches maintained relatively even shares of control over the direction of American foreign policy, while the judicial branch always had a minor, peripheral role to play. The division of powers established within the federal government was organized in a way that formal foreign policy making power was split between the executive and the legislative branches.¹⁶⁶ Alan P. Dobson and Steve Marsh, both of whom have thoroughly examined the U.S.-U.K. transatlantic relationship, write that since 1945, power to formulate foreign policy has shifted within the bureaucracy; largely between the executive and legislative

¹⁶⁶ Dobson, Alan P., and Steve Marsh. *US Foreign Policy Since 1945*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006, 8.

branches.¹⁶⁷ The shifting of power, they argue, is largely to be attributed to the nature of the president (the strength of his personality, interest and experience abroad, etc.) – since he has the power to command the armed forces, negotiate treaties and appoint diplomats, he can wield significant power – if he is assertive.¹⁶⁸

Congress maintains formidable powers, including control of the purse, the two-thirds Senate approval for diplomatic nominees and senior executive appointments, and the ratification of treaties.¹⁶⁹ Of the two houses of Congress, the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee has long been considered the most powerful and has been utilized by presidents as a soundboard for advice and ideas.¹⁷⁰ Lastly, the power of congressional oversight is another key power Congress maintains over the executive, although the authors argue that this power has been diminished by the growth of the national security state,¹⁷¹ a common conclusion that has also been made by noted historians twentieth century historians, including Garry Wills (*Bomb Power*)¹⁷², Stephen E. Ambrose, Douglas G. Brinkley (*Rise to Globalism*)¹⁷³, and Christopher Andrew (*For the President's Eyes Only*).¹⁷⁴ Like the aforementioned works, a portion of Dobson and Marsh's *US Foreign Policy Since 1945* is dedicated to the growth of influence that the National Security Council (NSC) has gained in the realm of foreign policy at the expense of the Department of State (DOS) as well as the legislature.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 8.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 8-9.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 9.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 10.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 11.

¹⁷² Wills, Garry, *Bomb Power: The Modern Presidency and the National Security State*. New York: Penguin Press, 2010.

¹⁷³ Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*. 9th rev. ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2011.

¹⁷⁴ Andrew, Christopher M. *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency From Washington to Bush*. London: HarperCollins, 1995.

In harmony with Wills, Ambrose, Brinkley and Andrew, Dobson and Marsh write that the signing of the National Security Act of 1947 was a seminal moment – not only in how the defense and security components of the federal government would be organized, but also with regard to long-term, perhaps then-unanticipated ways foreign policy power and influence would shift. By creating the Department of Defense (DOD) to replace three independent services, the president was able to achieve unification; and the creation of the NSC and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) consolidated information and power in the hands of the nation’s chief executive.¹⁷⁵ By formalizing a close-knit relationship with National Security Advisors (NSA) like Kennedy with McGeorge Bundy or with particularly powerful and influential advisors like Nixon and Ford with Henry Kissinger, the presidency seized foreign policy power over the later-half of the twentieth century.¹⁷⁶

Sometimes the executive’s seizure of power away from the legislature was less visible, albeit no less impactful. Whether President Lyndon Johnson’s “Tuesday luncheons” where he discussed tactical and operational strategy in Vietnam¹⁷⁷ – sometimes going as far as picking out specific targets for campaigns – or, President Nixon’s acceptance of Henry Kissinger as both Secretary of State and NSA,¹⁷⁸ various actions taken by American presidents in the latter half of the twentieth century consolidated presidential power immensely. This accumulation of power, in conjunction with the growth of the security state – a combination of unrepresented military power,

¹⁷⁵ Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, 89.

¹⁷⁶ Dobson, Alan P., and Steve Marsh. *US Foreign Policy Since 1945*, 12-13.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 13.

¹⁷⁸ Andrew, Christopher M. *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency From Washington to Bush*, 351.

nuclear supremacy, secret intelligence agencies, and over classification of information¹⁷⁹ – provided the president with what Wills calls a “private monopoly over nuclear weaponry,” leading to the creation of an “American Monarchy”;¹⁸⁰ and the erosion of settled constitutional order.¹⁸¹ When one considers less obvious measures taken to weaken the constitutional balance of power envisioned by the Founders – like the excessive use of executive agreements – a process that has dramatically altered the treaty process as it was intended, presidential power has grown significantly. The ratio of signing executive agreements to the passing of treaties has been approximately 7:1 since the end of World War II,¹⁸² signaling an ascension of presidential power.

Whether the president’s accrual of power was so dramatic or more of an evolutionary adaptation necessary for a fast-changing and complex geopolitical landscape, the American president established himself as the single-most important factor in American foreign policy formulation and implementation.

Strategic Control (Management)

Having established that the president is the key component in American foreign policy, we can then begin the work of ascertaining what quality is most useful for conducting and overseeing the implementation of successful foreign policy. To be sure, there are many traits that are desirable in national leaders: possession of sound judgment, ability to compromise, and a knack for managing various cabinet or ministerial personalities. While all important, national-level leadership boils down to decision-

¹⁷⁹ Wills, Garry, *Bomb Power: The Modern Presidency and the National Security State*, 237.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 222.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 238.

¹⁸² Dumbrell, John, and David M. Barrett. *The Making of US Foreign Policy*. 2nd ed. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997, 135.

making, and therefore no other skill is as valuable as the ability to think strategically and exercise strategic control.¹⁸³

By strategic control, we are referring to the broad executive-level managerial and decision-making powers the president wields, particularly as it relates to foreign policy. While executive-level management could be considered the same as the aforementioned management of various cabinet and ministerial-level personalities, we would differentiate the two, further specifying that the executive-level management we are concerned with relates only to foreign policy, and that it includes more than mere personality management. We would argue that at its core it consists of knowing when to exert more strategic control and when to delegate strategic control – and then acting upon it.

Within the realm of foreign policy, this of course would most commonly imply exerting over or delegating strategic control to military leadership, which Eliot Cohen writes about in his chapter “Leadership Without Genius,” in *Supreme Command*.¹⁸⁴ He writes that there is a fine balance to be struck between “usurpation of strategic control” and micromanagement, and that American civil-military relations has declined – perhaps a result of senior military leaders being schooled in politics whereas senior political leaders are seldom schooled in military affairs.¹⁸⁵

While strategic capability has arguably been lacking in American foreign policy and civil-military relations generally have become strained, both in theory should be easy to cultivate – particularly if a president possess a strong command of strategic control. Military leaders are today more accessible to their civilian counterparts; they attend

¹⁸³ Cohen, Eliot A. *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership In Wartime*. New York: Free Press, 2002, 231.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 231.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 231 & 238.

conferences, interact candidly in interagency meetings and maintain offices within the bureaucracy in which they serve.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, frequent and frank interaction with senior level military leaders should improve a president's competency as a statesman.

The lack of exposure to military affairs that Cohen touches on is detailed at great length by others, who conclude that presidential candidates often possess little to no experience in statecraft and argue that this is the most prominent component missing from U.S. foreign policy.

Education (or Experience) & Misplaced Priorities

Robert E. Hunter, Senior Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University, suggests a different component in *Control of Foreign Policy: Management or Mishap*. As the title would suggest, Hunter argued – like those previously discussed – that the presidency is singularly foremost among other facets of government concerned with the implementation of foreign policy; a direct result of the passage of the National Security Act of 1947.

He suggested that American foreign policy has suffered since the end of World War II chiefly due to a preoccupation with domestic policy and a failure to adequately educate presidential candidates in foreign affairs and statecraft.

He wrote that the hasty education in foreign affairs that presidential candidates receive in the modern era is wholly inadequate when “world events are causing more problems for us than at any other time in our history...”¹⁸⁷

The author charges that the process for educating our potential presidential candidates needs to change, as a quick impromptu lesson is inadequate for the demands

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 237.

¹⁸⁷ Hunter, Robert Edwards, *Presidential Control of Foreign Policy: Management Or Mishap*. New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1982, 65 & 67.

of the modern era where “world events are causing more problems for us than at any other time in our history,”¹⁸⁸ no doubt a product of globalization.

In total, the interconnected nature of the world mandates that foreign affairs takes a more prominent role in presidential agenda setting and necessitates that people are better educated about topics of international interest.

Interestingly, Hunter concludes his work writing “the success or failure of U.S. foreign policy is the responsibility of the president of the United States...the president must set the *central vision* of U.S. foreign policy, or at least be able to understand it,”¹⁸⁹ which leads us to believe that *central vision* precedes education in military affairs and experience in statecraft – as you could possess the latter but still fail in administering the elements of national power without the former.

Grand Strategy & Identifying National Goals

A third quality identified by scholars of import for executive-level leaders is the possession or understanding of grand strategy, defined as doctrine that informs a nation’s leaders what goals (interests) they should aim for and how best to utilize the various instruments of national power – particularly military power – in order to achieve these objectives.¹⁹⁰ Since grand strategy pertains to national interests, the choices made by national leaders when executing grand strategy are momentous choices, as they affect the posture of the nation.¹⁹¹

Robert J. Art, wrote that grand strategy inherently involves military power since it “is the most expensive and dangerous tool of statecraft,” and that it will remain important

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 67.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 90 & 91 (emphasis added).

¹⁹⁰ Art, Robert J. *A Grand Strategy for America*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003, 1.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 1.

for “the foreseeable future” because there is no world government to kill the existence of anarchy, which he defines as the absence of (world) government.¹⁹² Art takes a rather Clausewitzian view, charging that military power is the primary instrument by which a state can exert influence, and that politics is essentially about influence;¹⁹³ that is, getting other states to do what you want. As the most expensive and dangerous instrument of national power, deep appreciation and knowledge of it is imperative – especially as international events continue to have an appreciable impact on previously insulated domestic considerations.

Art wrote that military power has three political uses: deterrence, compellence (coercion) and defense, and that each are to be used to formulate a grand strategy that will secure national interests.¹⁹⁴ The understanding of grand strategy that Art calls for is undoubtedly a critical quality to possess if one hopes to formulate a credible and successful foreign policy agenda, but we wonder if it takes for granted other qualities previously examined in this paper (strategic control/management & that the national executive will prioritize objectives on the national agenda). Is grand strategy as foundational as strategic control, experience/exposure to statecraft, or prioritization of national objectives?

H.R. McMaster is yet another scholar who sees strategy as essential for success in international affairs. In his essay “The Uncertainties of Strategy,” McMaster wrote that recently there has been a tendency to overlook the interactions and intentions of foes, as well as other complicating factors – which has led to minimalistic and simplistic

¹⁹² Ibid, 4.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 4.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 4 & 6.

assessments, and ultimately to the setting of ambiguous strategic goals.¹⁹⁵ McMaster's review of Lawrence Freedman's revered work *Strategy: A History*, makes a very strong case for the absolute primacy of strategy in the administration of policy – whether it is military, foreign, political, or business policy. By imparting upon the reader that ambiguous strategy yields an undesirable – even unwinnable outcome – regardless of the presence of any other quality or trait, to include those previously mentioned, he makes it clear that the presence of sound, well-intentioned strategy needs to be placed first among other qualities considered “necessary” for the administration of successful policy.

Received Knowledge

Deep Thinkers & Architects

The administration of a nation's foreign policy is an awesome undertaking, and one that is increasingly the responsibility of the president. The works consulted and reviewed above attest to the fact that the executive branch has grown at the expense of the legislative and to a lesser extent, the judiciary. This occurrence can be explained by a combination of strong presidential personalities, changing threats, and globalization – the latter two mandating that foreign policy can no longer take a backseat to domestic agenda. In fact, the works consulted have determined that foreign policy has become increasingly more and more important, having the potential to now regularly impact previously insulated domestic policy.

With the president now wielding more power over foreign policy than at any other time in our nation's history, he shoulders the majority of the responsibility for the success or failure of it. As the most important component in U.S. foreign policy, the

¹⁹⁵ McMaster, H.R. “The Uncertainties of Strategy,” Review of “*Strategy: A History*,” by Lawrence Friedman, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 57:1, 202.

president therefore must possess a number of specific qualities that will enable him to implement successful policy, including: possession of strategic control (management), education/experience in statecraft, and grand strategy (identification of national goals, and knowing how to leverage instruments of national power in order to satisfy policy objectives).

Of the aforementioned qualities, it appears that the possession of an understanding of how to construct a grand strategy is the most fundamental, as one can possess the other qualities and still fail to administer any policy (foreign or domestic); as one can have the all the pieces to a puzzle and yet fail to fit them together in a cohesive manner if one lacks the *framework* of what exactly it is one is trying to construct. Without a perceived goal (end), one cannot successfully lay forth the steps (means) required to reach the desired outcome.

Theory & Hypothesis

Policy Formulation

Having identified the primary component (president) and quality (grand strategy) required for a prospective foreign policy to succeed, what then would a policy aimed at addressing America's top national objective look like?

We postulate that the formula for a successful foreign policy seemingly would be similar to the formulation of grand strategy articulated by Art (the steps of which include: 1) define national interests; 2) identify likely and dangerous threats to those interests; 3) and identify the best way of deploying military power in order to counter threats to the aforementioned national interests).¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 7.

Specifically, we would suggest that the formula for creating a successful foreign policy (one constructed with threat of force backing the intended objective; it is would be altogether unwise and unlikely a policy would be constructed without this guarantor for the reasons stipulated by Art (military power involves influence, which politics is chiefly concerned with, Clausewitz (“war is merely the continuation of policy by other means,”)¹⁹⁷ and McMaster) aimed at addressing a national goal or objective would include:

1. Identify and define the national interest.
2. Identify and classify threats to the national interest based upon realistic threat assessments.
3. Implement the qualities identified in the literature review of this paper (exercise strategic control, develop grand strategy, and supplement knowledge to achieve self-awareness).

The National Interest

At the outset of this paper, we suggested that the threat of a CRBN –related terrorist attack is among the most pressing threats facing our nation and is therefore a vital national interest. With the U.S. still maintaining a strong conventional force that, while diminished, is still unmatched in the world,¹⁹⁸ the likelihood of an all-out conventional war with a rising power like China or Russia is low. Alternatively, violent Islamist extremism is surging and is metastasizing throughout the entirety of the Middle East and North Africa and is now threatening Europe.

¹⁹⁷ Clausewitz, Carl von, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret. *On War*. Rev. ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984, 28.

¹⁹⁸ Wood, Dakota, ed. *2015 Index of U.S. Military Strength*. The Heritage Foundation, 2015, 13-14.

The threat that these groups present and their quest for weapons of mass destruction/mass casualty have been long documented, and predate the findings of the 9/11 Commission; findings that unfortunately only received adequate attention following the most catastrophic attack in history on the American homeland. In the recommendations section of *The 9/11 Commission Report*, titled “What To Do: A Global Strategy,” the commission participants recommend attacking terrorist organizations, preventing the continued growth of Islamist terrorism, and preventing and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.¹⁹⁹ The participants wrote “The greatest danger of another catastrophic attack in the United States will materialize if the world’s most dangerous terrorists acquire the world’s most dangerous weapons,” and that in the ten years prior to 9/11, al Qaeda had attempted to “acquire or make” nuclear weapons.²⁰⁰

While al Qaeda is no longer the threat it once was, as U.S. military operations have severely degraded the organization and executed key leadership,²⁰¹ the group is now more diffuse and former affiliates such as ISIS, Boko Haram and many others are filling the void and are intent on propagating extremely violent acts of terror in accordance with their organizational missions.

The prevention of an attack on the American homeland remains the top national interest. Regardless of the source, whether independent think-tank,²⁰² national security

¹⁹⁹ Kean, Thomas H., and Lee Hamilton. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Authorized Edition, 365, 374 & 380.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 380.

²⁰¹ Philips, James, “ISIS vs. Al Qaeda: The good news and the bad news,” The Heritage Foundation, January 21, 2015, <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/1/isis-vs-al-qaeda-the-good-news-and-the-bad-news> (March 2, 2015).

²⁰² Wood, Dakota, ed. *2015 Index of U.S. Military Strength*, 9.

scholar,²⁰³ or the United States Government (USG) itself, defense of the American homeland is the agreed top national goal and most hallowed constitutional mandate.

Now, with both our formula and our top national objective defined, what is needed to implement a successful foreign policy aimed at curtailing CBRN weapon access to terrorist organizations? Following our formula and having identified and defined the national interest, what is needed next is the identification and classification of threats to the national interest based upon realistic threat assessments. This will include identification and classification of CBRN weapons, their accessibility to terrorist organizations, and terrorist knowledge of them (as it pertains to effectively detonating/deploying the weapon).

Methodology

Identifying Top Concerns

As stated in the preceding section, by identifying and classifying various CBRN weapons that are both available to terrorists and have been pursued/deployed by terrorist organizations in the past, we can move one step closer to formulating a policy aimed at addressing the national objective of defending the American homeland from an asymmetric CBRN attack.

By closely examining each category (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear), looking at the strengths and weaknesses of each device/weapon, and determining the: 1) general accessibility to material/weapon; 2) ease at which the device/weapon could be deployed; and 3) which device/weapon meshes best with the stated organizational goals of specific terrorist organizations posing a threat to the United

²⁰³ Art, Robert J. *A Grand Strategy for America*, 7.

States, we can establish which weapon-type the U.S. should be most concerned with being in an attack on the homeland.

In following this methodology, we will then be set to highlight the qualities a president should possess to see a policy created to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction/mass casualty formulated.

Data – CBRN Analysis

Chemical Weapons

Extensively used during the First World War, chemical weapons came to be regarded as weapons of terror due to the fact that once the weaponized agent was dispersed it would incapacitate or kill whomever it came into contact with, often with little or no warning. Chemical weapons are defined as inherently toxic substances created with the intent of poisoning by way of inhalation, ingestion, contact with the skin (dermal), or a combination of all three.²⁰⁴ The most fundamental component of a chemical weapon is the agent, which is chosen and weaponized for use in chemical warfare (CW). Chemical agents are produced by mixing various chemical ingredients or precursors together based upon specific ratios.²⁰⁵ While relatively cheap to produce, chemical agents can prove difficult to weaponize; as they are often best dispersed in an aerosol form, a process that requires a high degree of technical ability in order to produce the optimal micron size (approximately 0.5-3 microns).²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*. Springer, 2002, 87.

²⁰⁵ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*. Carnegie Endowment, 2005, 62.

²⁰⁶ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 6 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

Aerosolization of a chemical agent is an example of weaponization, which is one of seven key considerations or properties that need to be examined prior to selecting an agent for weaponization. The seven key considerations are: lethality, mode of action, speed of action, toxicity, persistency, availability of agent/precursor, and weaponization.²⁰⁷ Lethality refers to the agent's ability or likelihood to induce death once deployed and is a key consideration when deciding to kill rather than incapacitate. Mode of action indicates how the agent enters/affects the target's body (typically via inhalation or percutaneous exposure). Speed of action simply refers to how quickly the agent's symptoms begin to become manifest; usually agents are intentionally created to produce an immediate effect or a delayed effect.²⁰⁸ Toxicity – a property closely linked to lethality – is the measure of the quantity of a particular chemical substance required to achieve a deleterious effect.²⁰⁹ Persistency refers to the length of time that a specific chemical agent will remain a hazard to health after its initial release. Chemical agents with a high degree of persistency are usually used as an area-denial weapon. Persistent agents are typically viscous, thick and oily (in liquid form) and can contaminate a battlefield for a significant period of time – up to a few weeks depending on the agent.²¹⁰ Agent/precursor availability is rather straightforward and is quite simply the ease of acquisition. This can vary tremendously, as some agents are very simple to manufacture, requiring only a few ingredients. Many precursors are readily available and can be purchased commercially; however, there are those that are more difficult to acquire and whose movement/purchase is monitored. Lastly, weaponization refers to how the agent

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 89.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 89.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 90.

is harnessed for military application. This usually includes delivery of the agent, which can be accomplished a variety of ways. Typically however, chemical agents are deployed as an aerosol.

There are four categories of chemical agents which are generally named after how they affect or attack the target. These four groups include: blood agents, blister agents, choking agents and nerve agents. Blood agents poison via skin contact or inhalation and attack their target by blocking the transport of oxygen by red blood cells from the lungs to tissue throughout the body.²¹¹ In concentrated doses, this can cause death by asphyxiation. Death occurs approximately 6-8 minutes after inhalation, although speed of action is contingent on time of exposure and the dose inhaled.²¹² Blood agents, while generally easy to produce, are very volatile – a quality that does not make them particularly useful for CW.²¹³ However, ease of production, their relatively high degree of persistency, and their volatility could all be interpreted as benefits by a non-state actor (NSA). Examples of blood agents include Hydrogen cyanide (HCN) and Cyanogen chloride (CK).

Blister agents (or vesicants) utilize chemicals to penetrate skin and tissue to destroy cells by reacting with proteins, enzymes and DNA.²¹⁴ In destroying cells, blister agents produce severe chemical burns and large fluid-filled blisters or pustules. While blister agents can be inhaled (and damage the upper respiratory system), these agents are most effective via skin contact, and are especially detrimental to external organs, like the

²¹¹ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 62.

²¹² Ibid, 79.

²¹³ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 12 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

²¹⁴ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 62.

eyes. Exposure to blister agents such as Sulfur mustard (HD) or Phosgene oxime (CX) – particularly in liquid or vapor form – can result in temporary or permanent blindness, and in some cases even death. This is because vapor is an extremely efficient delivery mechanism; for example, exposure to less than one gram of Sulfur mustard for thirty minutes will likely kill an adult male.²¹⁵ Speed of action varies greatly for vesicants, as symptoms pertaining to Sulfur mustard poisoning are usually delayed, not showing until hours after exposure.²¹⁶ Conversely, symptoms from Phosgene oxime poisoning are immediate, occurring within seconds of exposure.²¹⁷ The general traits maintained by blister agents – particularly their persistency, fast acting nature, and their serious and debilitating effect – would likely draw NSAs towards them.

While choking agents were among the first chemical agents used in modern warfare,²¹⁸ they were quickly phased out as more lethal and effective agents were produced and today no longer have much military application. However, due to the fact that the technology and knowledge required to manufacture them has proliferated,²¹⁹ choking agents could be appealing to a NSA. A few of the best known choking agents include chlorine (CL), phosgene (CG) and chloropicrin (PS) – all three of which saw extensive use in World War I.²²⁰ The aforementioned agents – and choking agents generally – affect their target primarily via the respiratory tract (though they can irritate the sinuses as well) and can cause pulmonary edema if the target is introduced to

²¹⁵ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 101.

²¹⁶ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 12 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 93.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 93.

²²⁰ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 12 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

sufficient quantities of the agent.²²¹ As noted above, choking agents were quickly replaced by more toxic agents, and this was primarily because high levels or concentrations of the agent were needed to reach lethal levels.²²²

Nerve agents are widely considered the most lethal of all chemical agents, and due to the complexity in both producing and weaponizing them, they are usually considered the premier CW agent. Due to the technical difficulty required to produce them, nerve agents – particularly the more complex V-series variants – are often only possessed by nation-states who have the infrastructure, resources and technical ability needed to create them. This however, does not mean that NSAs do not have an interest in either acquiring them or eventually pursuing an ability to produce them, as they realize that nerve agents may allow them to reach their ideological goals.

Known as “second-generation” CW agents, nerve agents such as tabun (GA), sarin (GB), soman (GD) and the V nerve agent (VX) disrupt nerve impulses in the human nervous system,²²³ which can result in death if exposed to a toxic concentration. There are many modes of action for nerve agents, as they can enter the body through the eyes, skin or respiratory tract.²²⁴ Nerve agents specifically prevent the utilization of the enzyme cholinesterase, which is essential to full physiological function and health.²²⁵ The body’s inability to utilize cholinesterase can result in loss of consciousness, convulsions, muscle weakness or paralysis and respiratory failure.²²⁶ These particularly

²²¹ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 93.

²²² Ibid, 93.

²²³ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenal: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 63.

²²⁴ Ibid, 77.

²²⁵ Tucker, Jonathan B. *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda*, 110-111

²²⁶ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenal: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 77.

visible, violent symptoms – paired with the agent’s rather immediate speed of action – make nerve agents a particularly gruesome CW.

Chemical Assessment

From the perspective of a NSA, possession of VX would present a group seeking to commit an act of mass terror (and/or mass casualty) with an incredibly potent agent for doing so. VX is more toxic and more persistent than the G-Series nerve agents it was create to replace such as GA, GB and GD. Additionally, VX can be absorbed through the human body in a variety of modes; meaning that once it is delivered, it can affect the target population and can easily wreak havoc. Likewise, the agent’s quick mode of action (several seconds to a few minutes depending on the dose delivered)²²⁷ would yield definitive results (results that terrorist groups are likely to pursue).

The symptoms following exposure to VX would probably be appealing to a terrorist group, as sudden loss of consciousness, violent convulsions, muscle twitching, paralysis and respiratory failure would instigate panic and fear among a civilian population exposed to the agent (as they would likely be uninformed about CWs and terrified by what they were witnessing). The selection of a nerve agent over other chemical agents such as blistering, blood and choking agents would also provide the NSA with an agent that would be incredibly difficult to initially detect – like other nerve agents, VX is almost impossible to detect – it is an odorless and straw-colored liquid and does not contain any particular characteristics that would be noticeable to most

²²⁷ Ibid, 77.

humans.²²⁸ This is a definitive advantage over agents such as lewisite and diphosgene which have noticeable scents.

The three significant problems that a NSA would encounter when trying to launch a VX plot would be acquiring the necessary precursors, weaponization and dispersion of the agent. While a well-funded group may be able to overcome all three of these challenges, it would certainly be difficult. The difficulty of procuring the necessary precursors has kept many established nation-states from developing VX in the past (likely meaning that an NSA would have an even harder time with acquisition). Likewise, weaponization could prove difficult, as the proper micron size (approximately 3 microns) is absolutely necessary in order to ensure an effective weapon and can prove difficult without the proper technical means. Lastly, effective CW dispersal involves disseminating the agent into an aerosol. While this can be accomplished through technical means, the dispersed VX cloud would be highly susceptible to environmental conditions such as wind speed.²²⁹ This would mean that careful meteorological analysis and analytical forecasting would need to be considered pre-attack.

Biological Weapons

To state succinctly, biological weapons are weapons that deliberately unleash infectious disease with the aim of creating mass casualties.²³⁰ Due to their unique ability to infect people quickly and efficiently, biological weapons are considered to be

²²⁸ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 12 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

²²⁹ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 63.

²³⁰ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 193.

particularly dastardly. Biological agents can be bacteria, toxins or viruses²³¹ and can infect both humans and animals via inhalation, open wounds, and by contamination of food or water.²³² Like chemical agents, biological agents are most effective when delivered as small particles in aerosol form (0.5-5 microns are ideal)²³³ where after they can be inhaled deep into the lungs. A biological agent is considered suitable for biological warfare (BW) if it possess one or more of the following key features: it can infect in small doses, it possess survivability, it can remain potent for an extended period of time, it possess a short incubation period, it is resistant to accessible/common forms of medical treatment, and is economically feasible to manufacture.²³⁴

NSAs looking to commit acts of terror are interested in biological agents because they typically possess a high mortality rate, can cause severe psychological and economic/financial trauma, and depending on the agent selected, can be easy to acquire/produce.²³⁵

As stated above, biological agents are typically classified by type. These types include two infectious microbial pathogens – bacteria and viruses – and a third type known as biological toxin.²³⁶ Bacterial agents include anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*), plague (*Yersinia pestis*), tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*), and cholera. These causative agents all boast medium to high lethality and incubation periods of typically only a few

²³¹ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 19 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

²³² Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 193.

²³³ Ibid, 193.

²³⁴ Ibid, 194.

²³⁵ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 19 Feb. 2014. Lecture.

²³⁶ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 204.

days.²³⁷ With the exception of *Yersinia pestis*, the other aforementioned bacterial agents do not transmit from person-to-person,²³⁸ which would likely be considered a suboptimal feature for BW. However, due to their high lethality, these agents could be appealing to a terrorist organization.

Viruses, simple infectious agents that rely on hosts to thrive and multiply, are very small parasites – typically under 0.3 microns in diameter.²³⁹ Well-known viruses that have been weaponized for use in BW include: smallpox (*Variola major/minor*) and the hemorrhagic fever viruses (including Ebola, Marburg, Dengue and Yellow fever).²⁴⁰ Both *Variola major* and the hemorrhagic fever viruses are highly lethal, though they possess a longer incubation period than the bacterial agents referenced above (the incubation period for smallpox is approximately 12 days and the incubation period for the hemorrhagic fever viruses ranges anywhere from 4-21 days).²⁴¹ One potential draw terrorists may find with viral agents is that they can be easily mistaken for the common flu – as the initial symptoms of many of these viruses include fever, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.²⁴² If a terrorist group were able to disperse any of these viral agents quietly (i.e. without use of explosives), the effects could be especially catastrophic, as many people would suddenly get sick without realizing how they became infected.

Toxins are biological poisons that are produced by living organisms and, unlike bacteria or viruses, toxins are entirely non-living (meaning that they cannot reproduce or

²³⁷ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 69-71.

²³⁸ Ibid, 69-71.

²³⁹ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 209.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 209-210.

²⁴¹ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 69-71.

²⁴² Ibid, 72-73.

²⁴² Ibid, 72-73.

spread).²⁴³ This quality makes toxins decidedly less deadly than bacterial or viral biological agents and it also makes them a much less effective BWs. Two well-known toxins are botulism (*Clostridium botulinum*) and ricin (*Ricinus communis*); both of which are extremely potent. Both act relatively quickly; 1-3 days for botulism and 8-24 *hours* for ricin, meaning that treatment must be rendered quickly if anyone affected is to be saved.²⁴⁴

Of the biological agents we have covered here, we find *Bacillus anthracis* to be the very striking due to its extremely hardy nature (most biological pathogens are very delicate and incapable of surviving in a variety of conditions; however, as a bacterial agent, *Bacillus anthracis* can survive for long periods of time in a wide range of environments).²⁴⁵ In its dormant spore form, *Bacillus anthracis* can persist for decades, becoming active when a suitable growth environment is found.

Aside from its incredibly persistent and survivable nature, we find that the effects of *Bacillus anthracis* following exposure would be of particular interest to NSAs and other groups interested in weaponizing a biological agent in order to create a mass terror event. The very short incubation period for anthrax infection (1-6 days), the rather generic set of initial symptoms (fever, fatigue and general malaise), and the deceptive “improvement” of the infected individual before symptoms significantly worsen²⁴⁶ could cause mass terror as doctors would be in a bind to determine/identify the cause. We

²⁴³ Ibid, 58.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 74-75.

²⁴⁵ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 206.

²⁴⁶ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 69.

believe that these traits would make the *Bacillus anthracis* bacteria a weapon of potentially high interest for a NSA.

Biological Assessment

From the perspective of a NSA, use of *Bacillus anthracis* as a biological agent possesses many benefits to a group seeking to deploy a potentially effective weapon suited for mass terror (all of which would rely on careful planning on the part of the group). To best explore and define these benefits or served goals, it is best to examine the agent's weaponization characteristics. First and foremost, *Bacillus anthracis* is relatively common (found in farms and textile industries),²⁴⁷ making acquisition easier than other biological agents, such as ricin (an agent that is much more difficult to weaponize).

Examining the method of deployment, *Bacillus anthracis* is best delivered as a powder (micron size of approximately 3 microns is optimal),²⁴⁸ which would allow the group to capitalize on the bacteria's hardy spore form, ensuring that the bacteria would survive until reaching the desired target. Utilizing *Bacillus anthracis* in a powder form would allow the group multiple delivery options as well. This has advantages over other biological agents, such as plague and tularemia, as these biological agents typically rely upon insect vectors (which are not as hardy/persistent as a spore). If delivered in a spore form via airborne means, various meteorological and terrain conditions would have to be accounted for, but other more predicable modes of delivery exist (i.e. via postal service, balloon, etc.) *Bacillus anthracis*' highly persistent nature could also produce severe economic devastation if properly dispersed, as this agent could contaminate large swaths

²⁴⁷ Croddy, Eric. *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, 206.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 206.

of land/infrastructure for a considerable period of time. Finally, when compared to other biological agents such as typhoid fever, Q-fever and tularemia, *Bacillus anthracis* is highly lethal.

In the aftermath of 2001 Anthrax scare that shocked Washington, DC, responsible for killing 5 Americans and sickening 17, biological weapons have taken somewhat of a backseat; especially when considering the media attention that the Iranian nuclear weapons program has drawn recently. It is quite strange that biological weapons – much less the worst biological attack in US history²⁴⁹ – have taken such a definitive backseat to other CBRN weapons, especially when one considers that there is no history of nuclear terrorism in the U.S. While the media may be engrossed with the prospect of a nuclear attack, there are many experts who propose that the most likely CBRN-type terrorist attack to come to fruition would be a biological attack. At face value, this prediction makes sense, as the production of biological weapons does not require the same level of technical ability and sophisticated infrastructure that nuclear weapons mandate. However, many specific biological agents do require a high degree of skill and knowledge to produce, meaning that their manufacture is no easy task.

The panel of experts who contributed to The Report of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism titled *World at Risk*, wrote that their research led them to believe that a bioterror attack is more likely to be conducted than a nuclear terrorist attack,²⁵⁰ a conclusion drawn from a series of findings, the primary one being that since 9/11, governments have primarily concerned

²⁴⁹ The Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Amerithrax or Anthrax Investigation.” <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/anthrax-amerithrax> (August 26, 2014).

²⁵⁰ Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism, *The World at Risk: The Report of the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism*, (2008), xv.

themselves with the prevention of nuclear terrorism.²⁵¹ The authors however, are careful to note that the threat of nuclear terrorism has not diminished; rather, that the threat of bioterror has risen to a comparable threat level.²⁵² This suggests that dual-use technologies are likely to be targeted by terrorist groups, as their procurement/purchase is likely to draw less attention from the authorities. The authors point this out, writing that as biotechnology has tremendously benefitted humanity, primarily by providing advances in agriculture and medicine, it has also increased the availability of pathogens and technologies that can be used for cruel purposes.²⁵³ Likewise, this conclusion is also telling about the terrorist's risk/reward calculus.

By concluding that terrorist organizations are primarily interested in biological and nuclear weapons, the subject matter experts (SMEs) contributing to the report are assuming that the terrorists are rational actors, and will only launch an attack with CBRN weapons if the inferred rewards (mass terror, casualties, media coverage/exposure, numerous goals met) outweigh the associated risks (failed/foiled plot, the aftermath does not draw the anticipated attention, the international community ostracizes those responsible). Ultimately, the commission declared that biological and nuclear weapons are the greatest threat posed by unconventional, CBRN weapons, concluding that these weapons have “the greatest potential to kill in the most massive number...”²⁵⁴

The authors of *World at Risk* surmise that nuclear or biological weapons are the most likely CBRN weapons to be pursued by would-be terrorists intent on launching a devastating attack with these taboo weapons. Suggesting that terrorist organizations

²⁵¹ Ibid, xvii.

²⁵² Ibid, xvi.

²⁵³ Ibid, xvi.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, xvi.

planning such an attack are rational, the authors wrote that groups intent on the use of CBRN weapons will only deploy them if the reward outweighs the risk. With regard to securing the weaponry or the hardware required to fabricate such weaponry, *World at Risk* warns that the next devastating attack featuring unconventional weapons is likely to originate within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan; citing country's status as a relative safe haven for terrorism and the presence of unsecure nuclear and biological material.²⁵⁵

Radiological Weapons

Radiological weapons are weapons that disperse radioisotopes - unstable isotopes (elements containing too few or too many neutrons) that are radioactive – with the expressed goal of contaminating either a targeted area or populace.²⁵⁶ While not weapons of mass casualty, radiological weapons are appealing to terrorists because of the relative ease of acquisition as well as their mass disruption potential,²⁵⁷ particularly from an economic/financial perspective.

Because they possess either too few or too many neutrons, radioisotopes inherently “decay”; a process by which they emit radiation. There are three forms of decay, which include: Alpha (α), Beta (β) and Gamma (γ). Alpha and beta radiation are the least concerning, as these forms of radiation have low penetrating power and can be blocked easily (they pose the greatest threat if/when inhaled/ingested). Gamma radiation however is serious, as it possesses great penetrating power. Therefore, radiological isotopes that emit gamma radiation – or a combination of all three – pose the greatest

²⁵⁵ Ibid, xxiii.

²⁵⁶ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 2 Apr. 2014. Lecture.

²⁵⁷ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 9.

danger and would likely be of the most interest to a NSA looking to commit an act of radiological terror.

Like chemical and biological agents, radiological isotopes also have a series of characteristics that are of concern and must be considered when attempting to determine how a NSA may look to weaponize and deploy/disperse radiological material. These characteristics include: mode of decay, half-life, availability and the actual/physical characteristics of the radioisotope.²⁵⁸ Mode of decay refers to what type of nuclear decay or radiation the radioisotope emits (alpha, beta, gamma or a combination of the three). Half-life refers to the time required for *half* of the element to decay. Availability simply refers to the ease of which a specific radioisotope can be acquired – which can vary tremendously depending on whether or not the isotope has commercial application or strictly comes from a research reactor.²⁵⁹ Physical characteristics of a radiological isotope include its activity level, hazard to health, and any commercial/industrial applications it may have.²⁶⁰ By weighing these characteristics, we can examine radioisotopes that may be of interest to NSAs and determine which type of improvised radiological harm device a group may pursue. We have examined three radioisotopes below, keeping the aforementioned considerations in mind.

Cs-137 (cesium-137) is a radioisotope that can be used in a radiological device. While Cs-137 has a long half-life of 30 years²⁶¹ (which resembles the amount of time needed for *half* of the element to decay) and therefore will not naturally emit as much radiation in large amounts as quickly as other radioisotopes of concern with shorter half-

²⁵⁸ Blair, Charles. Lecture. *Technology of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Johns Hopkins University. 2 Apr. 2014. Lecture.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

lives, it poses a significant threat if used in a radiological dispersal device (RDD), radiological emission device (RED) or radiological incendiary device (RID). This is because Cs-137 emits low amounts of high-energy beta radiation, which is capable of harming humans through inhalation²⁶², meaning that Cs-137 would be a very harmful if made into a powder. In powder format, Cs-137 could be inhaled by setting of a RDD or an RID (the smoke and fire from an RID would be particularly devastating). More importantly, Cs-137 emits high-energy gamma rays which are *very* penetrating and extremely harmful to humans.²⁶³ The high-energy gamma radiation contained within cesium-137 could be best dispersed using a RED.

Ir-192 (iridium-192) is another radioisotope of security concern. Comparable to Cs-137 in terms of relative activity (both radioisotopes have average active levels of natural decay or emission), Ir-192 has a half-life of 74 days.²⁶⁴ Again, similar to Cs-137, Ir-192 can effect humans both internally and externally (that is, through skin penetration or via inhalation).²⁶⁵ Ir-192 also emits high-energy beta radiation and high-energy gamma radiation; although it is important to note that iridium-192 emits a higher level of beta radiation as it decays.²⁶⁶ These traits mean that Ir-192 would likely be weaponized or dispersed in a fashion similar to Cs-137 (use of RDDs and RIDs to disperse the beta energy and use of a RED to disperse the high-energy gamma radiation to the target). One important consideration to keep in mind is that Ir-192 is a solid in its natural state, unlike Cs-137 which is typically a powder. Therefore, a NSA would likely want to use an explosive charge to break the Ir-192 into smaller particles for inhalation.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

Co-60 (Cobalt-60) is a versatile radioisotope that has many dual-use applications. It is a relatively active (medium) element with a half-life of 5.3 years,²⁶⁷ meaning that it is rather unstable and has many potential uses pertaining to radiological terrorism. Emitting both high-energy beta radiation (low) and a significant amount of high-energy gamma radiation, Co-60 can enter the human body both internally and externally.²⁶⁸ The beta emissions, while possessing some penetrating ability, are most dangerous when inhaled. The gamma radiation is quite penetrable, meaning that terrorists have a few options if looking to weaponize cobalt-60. As a solid metal in natural form, Co-60 may prove hard to properly weaponize for a RDD or a RID, but it is feasible. Use of high explosives or intense heat could allow for particles of Co-60 to be inhaled; however, it is much more likely that a terrorist organization would construct a RED if they acquired Co-60. This would play to the element's primary strength – the intense gamma radiation. An emission device would be most effective in using the element's incredibly penetrating gamma rays.

Nuclear Weapons

Last of the CBRN weapons, nuclear weapons – particularly Improvised Nuclear Devices (IND); the type most likely to be constructed by a group intent on committing an act of nuclear terrorism – and the fissile material required to create them must be examined if we are to understand the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Fabricating an IND, a crude nuclear bomb,²⁶⁹ will likely be the top choice of a terrorist group committed to nuclear terror; other options such as stealing an intact

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ferguson, Charles D. and William C. Potter. *Improvised Nuclear Devices and Nuclear Terrorism*. Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, 2004.

weapon is very difficult, and contains many potential pitfalls. Chief among them is overcoming the security guarding or protecting the weapon; because of their incredibly destructive nature, cost to produce/maintain, and the fact that nuclear weapons facilities are known targets for terrorist organizations, nuclear weapons facilities boast high levels of security and are difficult to breach. The second significant problem that a terrorist organization would encounter following this route would be how to set the weapon off once acquired. Unlike an IND that can be detonated rather simply, most military-grade nuclear weapons have elaborate firing mechanisms that would be difficult to override or actuate. However, the single largest problem with theft of a nuclear weapon would be the ensuing investigation and manhunt to find those responsible for the theft. The aftermath that would follow the theft of a nuclear weapon would generate an incredible amount of scrutiny and attention – both of which would likely preclude the terrorist organization from actually carrying out their planned nuclear attack.

Therefore, constructing a simple device within the confines of the group's technical ability is the most likely route – as this can be done on an unrestricted timeline, with fewer resources and without generating the attention of law enforcement. While perhaps a more favorable route for a terrorist organization to follow, it is by no means easy; as the group will have to come face-to-face with the challenge of acquiring the fissile material needed for their IND.

As we have seen with other CBRN weapons, acquisition is almost always the single largest challenge to overcome and is an area of constant concern. This is no different for INDs, which require fissile material; either highly enriched uranium (HEU)

or plutonium.²⁷⁰ Whichever type of material is selected or acquired will determine what type of IND the group will pursue; ownership of HEU means that the group can construct a gun-type nuclear device – which is the most simple in design and requires the lowest level of technical ability to create. Acquisition of plutonium mandates that an implosion-type weapon be constructed (a gun-type weapon can only be made using uranium), a more complex design that requires greater technical ability and also a more sophisticated understanding of conventional explosives.

According to conservative figures put forth by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 25 kilograms (kg) of HEU or 8 kg of plutonium would be needed to manufacture a IND.²⁷¹ The IAEA has defined HEU as uranium 235 that has been enriched to at least the 20% level,²⁷² and this is widely considered the fissile material seen as most ideal by terrorist organizations worldwide. The caveat with HEU is that stockpiles of this material are tightly watched; 99% of the world's stockpile (approximately 1,670 metric tons) is in the possession of the nuclear weapon states²⁷³ – meaning that access is highly restricted. Plutonium stockpiles – while still very secure – would probably be easier for would be terrorists to access as this type of fissile material is produced as a by-product in civilian nuclear reactors.²⁷⁴ These facilities are far more common than traditional military facilities housing HEU and while they would still have security considerations to overcome, they would be decidedly easier to crack than the security at a military nuclear weapons facility.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Glaser, Alexander and Mian, Zia. "Fissile Material Stocks and Production, 2008." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 65, No. 1 (January 2009).

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

A gun-type weapon is the oldest method for creating a supercritical mass (a nuclear explosion) and it does so by rapidly launching one subcritical mass of uranium into another subcritical mass of uranium.²⁷⁵ The two masses are arranged in a barrel, with one mass located at the top of the barrel and another mass located at the bottom. The mass located at the top is fired or launched into the second mass using conventional explosives. For this type of weapon, the components are relatively simple and can be constructed with basic equipment.

An implosion-type weapon still classifies as a basic or crude nuclear weapon by design, though it is decidedly more complex than the aforementioned gun-type weapon. The implosion-type design is predicated on compressing the plutonium in a very rapid, yet precise manner.²⁷⁶ This can be difficult to accomplish for someone without great knowledge of explosives, as the set charges must all detonate simultaneously for the mass to compress at an even rate. Failure to have the subcritical mass compress evenly can result in what is known as a “fizzle,” which simply means that the device will fail to detonate fully.²⁷⁷ A device that “fizzles” can still produce a nuclear yield, though it will be significantly less powerful than the anticipated blast.²⁷⁸

A successful IND would have a yield ranging from 10-20 kilotons – close to the size of the explosion that took place at Nagasaki.²⁷⁹ While not as destructive as modern two-stage thermonuclear weapons, a blast of this size would still be devastating. A device of that size could wipe out the center of a medium-sized city and would also cause

²⁷⁵ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, 48.

²⁷⁶ Ferguson, Charles D. and William C. Potter. *Improvised Nuclear Devices and Nuclear Terrorism*.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

untold financial, economic and physiological damage. While nuclear terrorism is not an impossibility, both military and civilian nuclear facilities have extremely complex security measures to prevent theft. As stated above, the key roadblock preventing nuclear terrorism is the acquisition of fissile material.

Radiological & Nuclear Assessment

While all forms of CBRN terrorism are gruesome, the prospect of radiological and/or nuclear terrorism is arguably the most horrific – and certainly the most awesome in terms of total destructive power – especially when one considers the imagery and fear that such weapons invoke. While many consider the likelihood of a nuclear terrorist attack to be infinitesimal, it is still within the realm of possibility. This possibility if anything, is likely growing, especially now, in an age of where countries are racing to construct nuclear power plants as a way to wean themselves off traditional fossil fuels. Because of this international shift towards nuclear energy, nuclear fuel is now more accessible than ever and one can be certain that savvy terrorist networks committed to the use of nuclear weapons are devising plans to acquire it.

Writing in the *British Journal of Political Science*, Bryan Early, Matthew Fuhrmann and Quan Li argued that a country's vulnerability to NR terrorism grows as the size of the country's nuclear program increases, suggesting that the presence of an expansive or growing nuclear infrastructure further facilitates the efforts of terrorists to steal nuclear and radiological material.²⁸⁰ The writers forecast that growing energy demand, energy shortages, and environmental stress is likely to lead to the construction of more civil nuclear energy programs – many of which are being constructed in the

²⁸⁰ Bryan R. Early, Matthew Fuhrmann and Quan Li (2013). "Atoms for Terror? Nuclear Programs and Non-Catastrophic Nuclear and Radiological Terrorism." *British Journal of Political Science*, No. 43, 915.

Middle East.²⁸¹ It is also important to also note however, that the authors argued that as nuclear infrastructure is built up, so too are the regulatory and security apparatuses aimed at increasing nuclear security while simultaneously decreasing the chances of NR terror or accident.²⁸²

Furthermore, the authors stated that the likelihood of nuclear terrorism can be further reduced if the governing body reduces corruption.²⁸³ What the writers ultimately suggest is that nuclear programs can both influence terrorist incentive or constraint – depending on how proactive (or inactive) the government is at setting up a carefully planned, secure nuclear energy regime.

Accessibility aside, Early, Fuhrmann and Li list a number of reasons for why NR terrorism is so hard to pull off. Many of the reasons are apparent, and include items such as intensive planning, major financing, a high-degree of technological sophistication, and highly trained personnel.²⁸⁴ They also briefly browse over why a terrorist organization, given the proper ideology, objectives and profile, would seek to launch such an attack. Reasons provided include: potential to inflict more damage and disruption (when compared to other forms of terrorism), maximum publicity and overall “impact,” and the generation of widespread fear and insecurity.²⁸⁵

Discussion

Weapon selection and weapon appeal is dictated by a number of factors, chief factors being: ability, intent, goal, available components (equipment/materials), and the perceived risk vs. reward (desired outcome). The importance of these factors and their

²⁸¹ Ibid, 915.

²⁸² Ibid, 915-916.

²⁸³ Ibid, 915.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 917.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 917.

relative value to one another is dependent on the ideology of the terrorist group. Terrorist organizations who maintain extreme ideologies – such as Hamas, Hezbollah and ISIS – who respectively seek to “raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine,”²⁸⁶ destroy Israel and resist Western involvement in the Middle East,²⁸⁷ and establish a domineering caliphate,²⁸⁸ respectively (While Article 31 of the Hamas Charter states that members of Islam, Christianity and Judaism can all “coexist in safety and security,” Article 31 also states that “Safety and security can only prevail under the shadow of Islam,” and only if “members of other religions...desist from struggling against Islam over sovereignty” for the region),²⁸⁹ clearly possess definite, uncompromising charters; which suggests that an uncompromising and indiscriminate choice may be pursued. The threat that these three respective organizations pose to the United States is greater than their harsh charters or mission statements may suggest, and all three are currently active and arguably putting pressure on the United States simultaneously.

As the data section revealed, biological, nuclear or radiological terrorism is perhaps most appealing to terrorist organizations because of the potentially greater reward (desired maximum effect). Research further suggests that organizations with an avowed apocalyptic or intolerant vision are likely to pursue CBRN weapons that have the potential to be utterly devastating; these weapons being biological and nuclear weapons, as they are capable of mass death and mass terror. Unsecure nuclear and biological

²⁸⁶ The Jerusalem Fund, “Hamas Charter (1988),” <http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/www.thejerusalemfund.org/carryover/documents/charter.html?chocaid=397> (September 5, 2014).

²⁸⁷ Zachary Laub & Masters, Jonathan. “Hezbollah.” Council on Foreign Relations, January 3, 2014. <http://www.cfr.org/lebanon/hezbollah-k-hizbollah-hizbullah/p9155> (September 5, 2014).

²⁸⁸ Zelin, Aaron Y. “The Islamic State of Iraq Attempts to Create a State in Syria and Iraq,” The Washington Institute (June 17, 2014) <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-islamic-state-of-iraq-attempts-to-create-a-state-in-syria-and-iraq> (September 5, 2014).

²⁸⁹ The Jerusalem Fund, “Hamas Charter (1988).”

material located in corrupt regions is likely to be targeted by terrorist organizations intent on creating mass casualties or mass destruction. Such groups would need to be well funded and would require tremendous technical ability to carry out such an attack. The group would also have to subscribe to an ideology that would mandate or encourage such an extreme act.

Similarly, countries possessing nuclear programs and a corrupt and/or a very weak governing system, possessing little by the way of civil society, are likely to be targeted by would-be nuclear terrorists. While the act of nuclear terrorism would still prove difficult to carry out if the required material was secured, possession of such material could still pave the way for radiological terrorism; which is perhaps an even more frightening outcome, given that it is a higher probability attack as well as appealing to a wider spectrum of terrorists.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines terrorism as “an unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”²⁹⁰ I would therefore posit that an act of mass terror (not only an act of mass destruction) is an attempt to overwhelmingly and unconditionally coerce, force or otherwise intimidate an unwilling populace or government using extreme and unprecedented violence. Ultimately, an act of mass terror is just as vicious a plan to reroute society as an act of mass destruction.

That being said, while the selection of a biological or radiological terror device/weapon certainly seems to possess the best balance of risk and reward in that the

²⁹⁰ Chase, Eric. “Defining Terrorism: A Strategic Imperative.” Small Wars Journal, January 24, 2013. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/defining-terrorism-a-strategic-imperative> (September 5, 2014).

lower technical threshold and modest accessibility of both would make it easier to build/detonate and far easier to construct and put in place without alerting the authorities, we believe that the U.S. government should be chiefly concerned with the prospect of a nuclear attack on the American homeland.

Of the many reasons that come to mind, two appear to be the most prescient. First is that the detonation of a nuclear device/weapon is a surefire way to potentially release incredibly destructive damage on the American homeland. The U.S. and her citizens are a strong and resilient people, and can overcome incredible odds and dangers. America's history is one of taking on and overcoming incredible challenges and outlasting ideologically opposed foes. However, one has to yield to the awesome destructive power of nuclear weapons. In a way, nuclear weapons are one of the few things that have the potential to damage us beyond repair and scar our society permanently.

Second, the terrorists threatening the U.S. and her allies are not only rational actors, they are terrorist armies that are seeking to carve out and hold real territory. In the effort to establish themselves as states in their own right, these far-flung, diffuse organizations must do what they can in an attempt to match up against the might of developed nations fighting them such as the U.S. and her coalition allies. These self-fashioned states will never be able to match the military power the U.S. commands, meaning that they will be forced to develop other instruments of power. The possession of a nuclear weapon – not even necessarily the *use* of a nuclear weapon – could give an organization the bargaining chip required to engage and interact with nation-states in the traditional sense.

Conclusion

The goal of this paper has been to identify the primary component in American foreign policy (the president), and the qualities that are essential for the best chance of successfully applying (possession of strategic control, education/experience in statecraft, and grand strategy) a foreign policy aimed at keeping violent Islamist terrorist organizations intent on harming American citizens and attacking the U.S homeland from acquiring CBRN weapons.

By determining that the president maintains the most power (relative to the other branches of government) as it pertains to foreign policy administration, we were then able to craft a formula by which a sustainable foreign policy could be crafted. This formula contained three major steps, including: 1) identify and define the national interest; 2) identify and classify threats to the national interest based upon realistic threat assessments; and 3) applying the qualities identified towards completing the policy implementation process.

By arguing for the defense of the American homeland as the top national interest and presenting the threat of a CBRN-related terrorist attack as the top threat to that interest, we formed a policy for how to address the threat; starting with an evaluation of CBRN weapons.

Through our threat assessment, we determined that a nuclear device/weapon in the hands of a terrorist organization would pose the single greatest threat to the American homeland. While not the easiest to procure and deploy, in the hands of a violent Islamist organization dedicated to an apocalyptic charter, a nuclear device would provide them with a true tool of terror and serve as a political instrument that could be used to leverage

considerable concessions. It is also important to note that while a low-probability event, the probability is certainly growing as nuclear energy production grows across the planet and dual-use technologies become more and more accessible.

Moving forward, this research could be followed on with continued analysis of how a U.S. president could utilize the formula developed here and the threat analyses presented to *actually* deliver a sustainable foreign policy aimed at curtailing terrorist access to CBRN weapons. Building off the preceding works, this new analysis could include how one would introduce conservative geopolitical principles in an effort to establish a baseline or foundational approach to U.S. foreign policy that could be followed by proceeding presidents, which in theory could yield a more straightforward approach to the implementation of U.S. foreign policy.

Portfolio Conclusion:

The world we inhabit today is one of continual change and rapid development; the complex problems confronting one nation are continually becoming problems shared by many, necessitating international participation, cooperation – particularly among allies – and a deeper, more nuanced appreciation of the inescapable realities that policymakers must contend with when trying to affect change.

The work encompassed in this portfolio has been an attempt at constructing a framework for how to administer or implement foreign policy – particularly U.S. foreign policy – moving forward into the twenty-first century.

The three topics examined in the portfolio – the process of selling, crafting and developing policy – were chosen with the aim of breaking down the foreign policy process so that the fundamental aspects of the implementation process could be better

understood. By laying out the individual components, the aim was to strip away the veneer in order to better examine that which is often hidden from sight or all too easily taken for granted – the foundation.

We believe that the foundation of U.S. foreign policy – particularly as it pertains to application or implementation – has been neglected over a series of years, subjected to theories that were better on paper than in practice; as well as those better put into action by parties other than military forces.

Frustration at home – as well as internationally – with the Global War on Terror, worsened by misguided and misinformed policy, a general disconnect between national objectives and ease of achievement at operational and tactical levels, and the cost in both blood and treasure led to a shift in national stance – at least by the our estimate.

We would opine that this shift was extreme, at least in the short-term, and can be partially attributed to problems plaguing the implementation of U.S. foreign policy since the close of the Cold War. Following the Cold War, the nation experienced a period of relative peace, which was abruptly and tragically shattered on 9/11. With no international policy in place, the U.S. had to hastily prepare one. In the decade-plus that followed, the U.S. wasted no expense in brining those responsible for that heinous attack to justice. However, over the course of that decade, mission creep set in, and the scope of the mission was widened drastically and with few clear, truly attainable objectives for which the military (the primary instrument used to execute the nation's policy) was really suited to pursue, copious resources were spent in an effort to offset poor strategy – all direct products of poor policy formulation and administration.

In the years following the gradual return of American forces from the theatre, the U.S. turned inward; with the public and many of those at the highest levels of our government looking for a new worthwhile initiative to pursue. While looking inward, hot spots erupted across the globe: the Arab Spring, the spread of ideologically-driven terrorism from North Africa to South East Asia, a resurgent Russia, and an aggressive China – all suggesting that an engaged America, guided by a well-thought out, well intentioned and feasible foreign policy is needed in the world.

The research compiled in this thesis portfolio was an attempt at finding a way to address these issues and set the U.S. on stable footing moving forward. By examining how monumental policy initiatives are often sold (primarily using religion as a political tool), should be created (by exploring critical geopolitical considerations that should never be ignored) and applied (by determining the top components needed for successful administration), we sought to suggest how U.S. foreign policy could be better implemented, so that extreme swings – like the recent example in our history referenced above – are avoided.

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Curriculum Vitae

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